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ON FEMALE YOUTH

**From Perception to Reality: A Qualitative Study of Migration of  
Young Women and Sexual Exploitation in Viet Nam**

**Rosanne Rushing**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
Degree of Doctor in Public Health**

**Department of Public Health and Policy  
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**

**April 2004**

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# **ABSTRACT**

Young women migrate from rural to urban areas for a multitude of reasons. As girls are encouraged to migrate into the city to find work, many are lured or tricked into selling sex to earn money. This study investigates the factors pushing a young woman from her village, pulling her to the city and the facilitating factors that enable her exploitation through migration and sex work.

This thesis discusses the current literature on migration and sexual exploitation and addresses the gaps in information from literature and from previous studies conducted in Viet Nam and regionally. The conceptual framework for this study illustrates that young women's migration and sexual exploitation in Viet Nam is influenced and then facilitated by numerous factors acting at national, communal, familial and individual levels. It also discusses the implications of the research findings for interventions and policies that aim to reduce levels of exploitation of young women through migration and sex work.

In-depth interviews took place with 20 randomly selected female migrants currently working as sex workers in northern Viet Nam. In-depth interviews were also conducted with 23 families in rural areas known to have children working in a city to help support the family. Additionally, key informant interviews were conducted with provincial and community leaders in both the rural and urban areas of this study.

This thesis describes and analyses a qualitative study, which explores the decision-making for youth migration, the communication processes between a child and parent and the facilitating factors that influence a daughter's exploitation through migration and sex work. In addition, the thesis explores the affects of migration and sex work on a young women.

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## **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to the many young women and families that shared their time and stories in order to make this research possible.

Much gratitude is owed to my family – without their support this degree would not have been possible.

I would like to thank my friends, those that have been with me from the start of this programme and supported me throughout – especially Maria and Manuel.

Many thanks to Brenda, Eleonore, Salim, Lori, Sharon, Mark and all those who took this journey with me.

A special thanks to Barbara and Gene Anderson for their support and encouragement. Thank you to Larry Holzman of DKT International Viet Nam.

Thank you to my supervisor Charlotte Watts and to my committee members, Karina Kielmann and Cathy Zimmerman.



## **DrPH SUMMARY STATEMENT**

The Doctorate in Public Health (DrPH) is intended for those who have been working in or expect a career in public health practice rather than in research. The DrPH is aimed at leaders and future leaders in public health practice.

The DrPH is comprised of three components; taught courses, a professional attachment affording the opportunity of reflecting on the practice of public health in a work setting, and a research project culminating in a thesis.

The taught element of the DrPH enhanced knowledge in specific areas, most notably in management and leadership. As I had already been working for non-government organisations in developing countries for many years, I felt there was an excessive gap in upper level management and management and leadership skills at this level. The eight-month course on management and leadership was extremely valuable as I gained much needed skills for continued work in non-government organisations. In addition to the management course, I took courses on Sexual Health, Medical Anthropology and Health Care Evaluation. These courses increased my knowledge and application of practical proficiency. In addition, a Qualitative Methods Workshop improved my qualitative skills and provided both theoretical and practical knowledge for research design and methods.

With these newly acquired skills, I arranged for my professional attachment with Family Health International (FHI) in Viet Nam. During my five months with FHI, I conducted evaluations for their USAID funded HIV/AIDS programmes in seven provinces. The process of evaluating FHI's programmes presented me the opportunity to work closely with FHI staff and with their government partners in the field. This allowed me to observe the work of a public health organisation and develop a better understanding of how to design and develop more effective public health programmes and interventions. Most importantly, this opportunity assisted in the understanding of proper management skills in order to empower staff and make programmes and organisations more efficient.

The third component of the DrPH is the research project. This component is intended to help students learn about the role of research in public health practice. In this way,

the research must be described in terms of public health importance, and the ways in which improved understanding might be expected to advance policy or practice in this aspect of public health.

For the research project, I worked with three different non-government organisations (NGOs). This assisted in the understanding of the commissioning and monitoring of research. In addition, I was able to see how the NGOs used the research findings to develop or adjust interventions. The dissemination of the findings was also an issue of importance. One NGO did not use a government partner and was therefore not permitted to disseminate the data findings. The other two NGOs work closely with government partners and use the findings as a key element in their lessons learned dissemination. While I have worked with NGOs for many years, the communist setting in Viet Nam is quite unique and the opportunity of working with NGOs and government partners added to both my academic knowledge and my practical experience in public health.

The DrPH was an appropriate match for my existing skills and my newly acquired skills in management and leadership and academic research. This programme will undoubtedly increase the capacity and effectiveness of public health practice.

# Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	Antenatal care
BCC	Behavioural Change Communication
BSS	Behavioural Surveillance Survey
CPCC	Committee for Protection and Care of Children
CPFC	Committee for the Population, Children and Family
CR	Community Representative
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSP	Casual sex partner
CV	Community Volunteer
DOLISA	Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs
DrPH	Doctorate in Public Health
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FHI	Family Health International
FSW	Female sex worker
GAATW	Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HR	Harm Reduction
HSS	HIV Sentinel Surveillance
IDI	In-depth Interview
IDU	Injecting drug user
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
IEC	Information Education Communication

<b>IOM</b>	<b>International Organisation for Migration</b>
<b>KSW</b>	<b>Karaoke-based sex worker</b>
<b>LDTD</b>	<b>Long distant truck driver</b>
<b>MOH</b>	<b>Ministry of Health</b>
<b>MOLISA</b>	<b>Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs</b>
<b>NAC</b>	<b>National AIDS Committee</b>
<b>NASB</b>	<b>National AIDS Standing Bureau</b>
<b>NCAPDPC</b>	<b>National Committee for AIDS Prevention and Drug and Prostitution Control</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Government Organisation</b>
<b>PE</b>	<b>Peer Education</b>
<b>PLWHA</b>	<b>People living with HIV/AIDS</b>
<b>RSP</b>	<b>Regular sex partner</b>
<b>SF</b>	<b>Seafarers/fishermen</b>
<b>SSW</b>	<b>Street-based sex worker</b>
<b>STD</b>	<b>Sexually transmitted disease</b>
<b>STI</b>	<b>Sexually transmitted infection</b>
<b>UK</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>United Nations Children's Fund</b>
<b>USD</b>	<b>United States Dollar</b>
<b>VND</b>	<b>Vietnam Dong (currency)</b>
<b>VWU</b>	<b>Vietnam Women's Union</b>
<b>YRI</b>	<b>Youth Research Institute</b>
<b>YU</b>	<b>Youth Union</b>

# **1 Introduction**

---

The migration and sexual exploitation of young women rarely act in isolation in Viet Nam, rather they are intrinsic in the interplay of many factors at the societal, communal, familial, and individual levels. Government policies, cultural norms and traditions, in addition to family and individual decision-making, influence the likelihood of the migration and sexual exploitation of young women in Viet Nam.

Many young women from rural areas are persuaded into migration and end up in sex work as a result of need or desire for increased income. In this way, young women are exposed to many high risk situations. While research has been conducted to investigate sex work and the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there has been little exploration of what factors cause a young woman to migrate or the implications of this decision.

This study aims to better understand the process of young women's migration and entry into sex work. It investigates the facilitating factors, which enable young women to migrate to the city, as well as the factors that may inhibit them from migrating. The findings of the research will be used to inform interventions that aim to reduce sexual exploitation of young women in Viet Nam.

## **1.1.1 Objectives**

1. To explore and document the experience of migrant girls who work in sex work about the process of migration and entry into sex work to include:
  - a) Process of decision-making for their migration
  - b) Young women's awareness of their situation prior to and during the migration process
  - c) Young women's understanding of work in the city
  - d) Steps that led to sexual exploitation and the circumstances of first sex with client
  - e) Perceptions of risk and risk-taking.
2. To identify potential household facilitating factors associated with young women's migration.

3. To gain an insight into the role that leaders, local police, community members, families and individuals may play in young women's migration and sexual exploitation, in addition to the facilitating or inhibiting factors of young women's migration currently and potentially.
4. To explore the implications of the findings for interventions to address the migration and sexual exploitation of young women, including HIV/AIDS interventions.

As the main aim of this study was to explore the perceptions and underpinnings of migration and exploitation and through this gain a more profound understanding of female migrant sex workers and their families, a qualitative approach was used. In-depth interviews were conducted with rural households and key informants in addition to interviews with young migrant women who are now sex workers in the city. Qualitative methods used for this study afforded a practical understanding of the complex issues related to exploitation through migration and sex work.

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. The chapters are purposefully ordered so that a story of the journey and stages of migration and sexual exploitation can be told. The journey begins with the decision-making process for a child's migration, her entry into sex work and the consequences of her status as a sex worker.

Chapter One is the introduction to the study and defines the terms used throughout the study. Chapter Two provides a background to Viet Nam. Chapter Three reviews the known literature on migration and sexual exploitation and discusses the conceptual framework. Chapter Four presents the methods used for this study. Chapter Five is the first of three data chapters. It analyses the data from interviews with rural households and key informants. In addition, this chapter compares the data with reports from interviews with the sex workers. Chapter Six presents a more in-depth look at young migrant women's entry into sex work. And Chapter Seven explores the affects of sex work on young women, both presently and potentially. Lastly, Chapter Eight presents a discussion on the findings and explores policy implications to address exploitation of young women in Viet Nam.

## 1.2 Definition of Terms

The term “**sex worker**” has been selected for this document and study in an attempt to choose a label that is respectful of the lifestyle of individuals who exchange sex for money, drugs or favours. It is recognised that the term “sex worker” may not be appropriate in all languages or for all situations, however it is most commonly used in Viet Nam (adapted from Ghee et. al. 1997). The terms ‘prostitute’ and ‘sex worker’ may bring up negative images. In the context of Vietnamese ideology they are associated with ‘social evils’. The term ‘sex worker’ is used here to describe girls/women working in the sex industry. No intention of stigma or disrespect is meant to the girls who gave generously of their time and shared their stories.

“Policy and programme development is best served by language that is not stigmatising and recognises that many of those involved in sex work regard it as their source of livelihood. Priority must be given to reflecting how those involved in sex work perceive themselves in that role. Note, however, that the majority of sex workers do not define themselves as such and consider the work to be a temporary activity. The term ‘sex worker’ has gained popularity over ‘prostitute’ because those involved feel that it is less stigmatising and say that the reference to work better describes their experience” (UNAIDS 2002).

The researcher is sensitive to the labelling of the girls who all have stories to tell. The researcher understands that this may not be how the girls view themselves. “The placing of labels is a largely subjective judgement dependent on the researcher and is not the way that women talk about themselves” (D’Andrea 2002). However, in the context of this study the researcher must decide upon a ‘label’ that best illustrates where the girls are at presently. The researcher aims to treat them as much the same as any person their age by referring to them as ‘girls’. During the interview process the young women referred to other women their age as ‘girls’, therefore, the term girls will be used interchangeably with young women to describe the women in this study.

The researcher also understands the global debate centred on the terms “sex work” and “prostitution”. While this debate continues, it is recognised that both terms may imply not only a political agenda but also an emotional perspective. As stated earlier, the researcher chose a term which was more culturally appropriate. The researcher’s intent remains respectful in the choice of terminology. The researcher also does not

mean to imply judgement on sex work, neither by girls who were tricked or lured into it nor to those who chose to enter sex work.

The term “**sexual exploitation**” shall mean all forms of exploitation related to sexual violence, abuse, prostitution, sex tourism, forced sex (rape) or sexual harassment (adapted from Article 3 of United Nations Convention Against Sexual Exploitation – CATW).

The term “trafficking” was purposely not used in this document, as it is challenging to discern which girls fit into the trafficking framework and which young women do not. The term “trafficking” and its framework were not used, so that all young women were treated equally – those who ‘chose’ to enter sex work and those who were deceived or lured into sex work. Much trafficking takes place through the migration process. However, the common factor under study was the decision-making and migration process leading to the sexual exploitation of these young women. The researcher realises that some young women were distinctly ‘trafficked’ and all of the young women interviewed for this study were migrants who had been exploited.

The term ‘youth’ or ‘young person’ (thanh thieu nien) in Viet Nam, refers to a person who is 10-24 years old, in this way, ‘youth’ or ‘girls’ will be used to describe the females in that category for the purpose of this study (Hong 2003).

The term ‘child’ shall mean any persons under the age of 16 years (the legal working age in Viet Nam). 18 years is the legal age of consent in Viet Nam.

**Casual sex partner** - A sex partner for less than one year who is not a spouse, live-in partner, or commercial sex partner.

**Commercial sex partner** - A partner who is paid money in exchange for sex (i.e., the partner is a sex worker).

**Consistent Condom Use** - Use of condoms every time during sexual relations with individuals in high-risk situations (e.g., using condoms every time with casual sexual partners; with sex workers; or if condom user has HIV or other STI - with their regular sexual partner such as spouse or steady girlfriend/boyfriend).

**High-Risk Behaviour** - Any behaviour that puts an individual or individuals at increased risk of contracting HIV/STI or transmitting HIV/STI to another individual (e.g.,



having multiple sex partners without using condoms consistently; sharing used non-sterile needles among IDUs).

**Injecting Drug User - (IDU)** An individual who has injected illegal drugs (e.g., heroin, opium) or injected various other drugs or combination of drugs for the purpose of getting high rather than for medical reasons.

**Karaoke-based Sex Worker** - Women who work in a variety of establishments such as karaoke-bars, restaurants, hotels, massage parlours, truck stops, who also sell sex to customers. They are considered to be indirect sex workers.

**Long Distance Truck Drivers** - Truck drivers who transport materials between cities and/or provinces who are often required to be away from home for one or more nights on a regular basis.

**Migrant Workers** - Workers who move from place to place to seek work opportunities on a temporary or semi-permanent basis in locations that require them to live away from their family/home of origin for periods of time of a month or more (such as construction workers; seafarers/fishermen; porters/stevedores).

**Non-paying partner** - A partner of a sex worker who does not pay for sex (includes regular and non-regular partners).

**One-time client** - A first-time or only-time client of a sex worker. The sex worker has not had any previous sex work experiences with the client and the sex worker does not know the client.

**Regular client** - A client with whom the sex worker has had commercial sex more than once.

**Regular sex partner** - A spouse, live-in partner or sex partner for one year or more.

**Sharing Needles and/or Injecting Equipment** - Reusing needles, syringes or other injecting equipment with other IDUs without properly sterilizing these equipments.

**Street-based Sex Worker** - Women who sell sex directly on the streets, actively soliciting clients outside or with the help of a pimp. (terms from Nguyen et. al. 2001)

## **2 Background: Viet Nam - Economic Reform, HIV/AIDS and Migration**

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### **2.1 Introduction**

Viet Nam is a country with a rich and diverse history. Confucian doctrine has remained influential in Vietnamese society. While Viet Nam remains a communist country, in the late 1980s it also began a programme of widespread economic reform and foreign investment. This economic reform has assisted in rapid development, but has impacted on Viet Nam's culture and society, and has been credited for an increased inequality between rich urban areas and poor rural areas.

Many girls from rural areas are persuaded into migration and end up in sex work as a result of need or desire for increased income. In this way, girls are exposed to many high risk situations. While research has been conducted to investigate sex work and the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there has been little exploration of what factors cause a girl to migrate or the implications of this decision. This chapter provides a background to Viet Nam, a review of the HIV epidemic and the government's response, and current literature on girls who have been exploited through migration and sex work.

### **2.2 Viet Nam**

Viet Nam includes tropical rainforests, agricultural plains, and forested hills and mountains. About 80% of land in Viet Nam has low agricultural productivity consisting of mountains, high plateaus, and jungles. The majority of food for the population is produced in the rice deltas. Viet Nam's Gross National Product per capita is \$370 (DHS 1999).

Viet Nam has a population of nearly 79 million with almost half this total (31,926,000) being under the age of 18 years. The majority (85%) of the country's population are Viet (or Kinh) people who live primarily in the Red River Delta, the central coastal plains and the Mekong Delta. Fifty-three different ethnic minorities account for the rest of the population, totalling nearly 8.4 million. These ethnic groups live predominantly in the mountainous areas of Viet Nam (Hellard and Hocking 2003).

The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is a communist country. Its administrative structure is made up of 61 provinces. Each province is divided into approximately 600 districts,

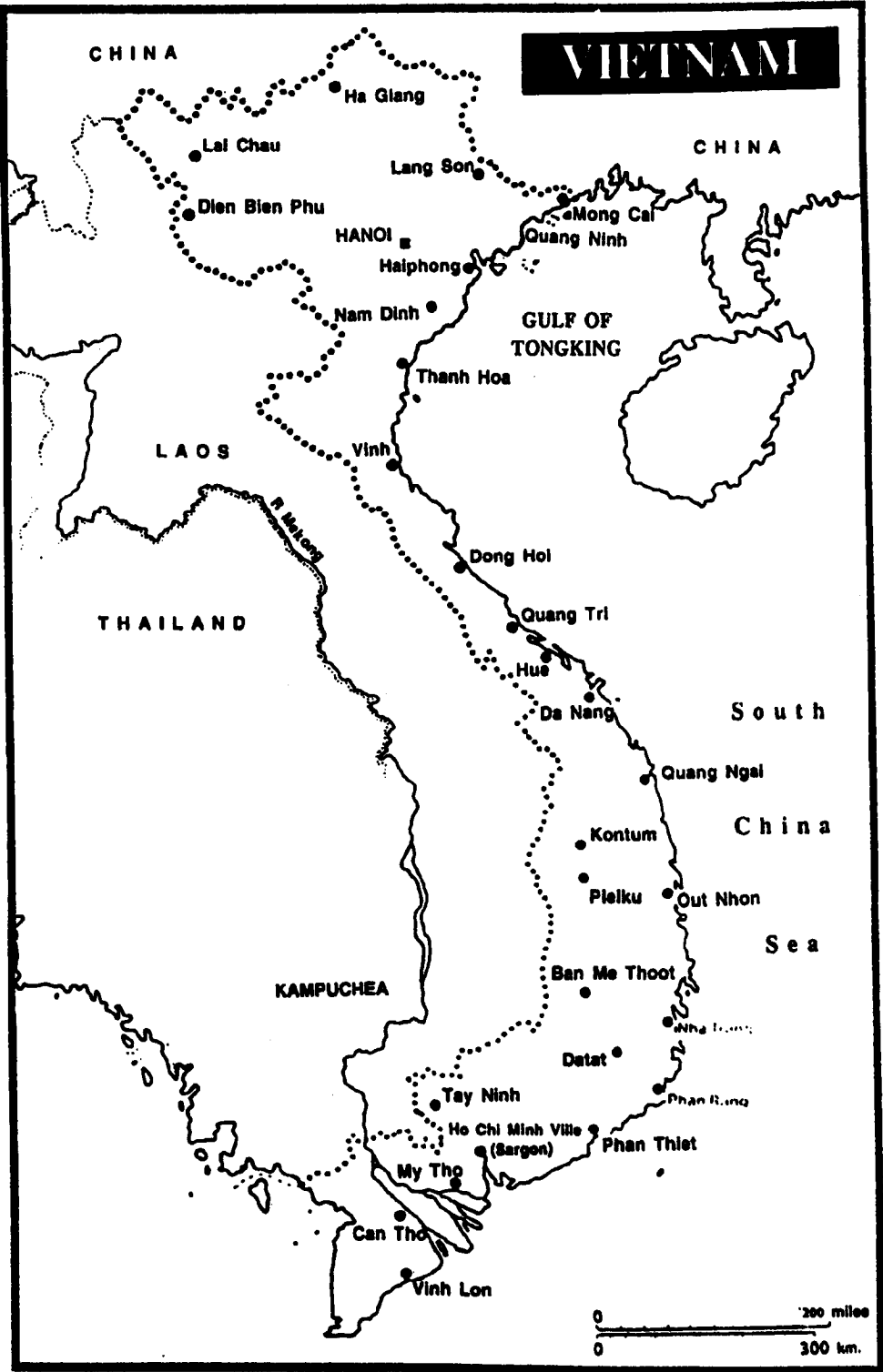
further divided into roughly 10,000 communes (Hong 2003). The communes include villages, and households within these villages.

The commune level of the administrative structure is viewed as the 'local community'. Each commune has its own administration made up of a commune leader, a vice-leader, selected commune officials, commune police, and commune representatives. Community representatives include local unions, health care workers, school administrative personnel, and community volunteers. The majority of laws and policies are regulated at the community level.

Viet Nam has exemplary health statistics due in part to the efforts and the resources allocated to health and education by the government. Four percent of government expenditure is allocated to health and 14% is allocated to education. As a result, Viet Nam's literacy rate is high, with 95% of males and 88% of females being literate.

The infant mortality rate is 31/1,000 live births. Maternal mortality is 160/100,000 live births. The government finances 100% of routine vaccinations. In addition, Viet Nam boasts a 75% contraceptive prevalence as it encourages a two child policy. It records that 85% of pregnant women are immunised against tetanus (UNICEF 2001).

**Figure 1: Map of Viet Nam**



## **2.3 HIV/AIDS and Social Evils in Viet Nam**

### **2.3.1 Prevalence of HIV/AIDS and High Risk Populations**

Compared to other countries in South East Asia, Viet Nam has a low HIV/AIDS prevalence (McCoy et. al. 2004). The first case of HIV infection in Viet Nam was reported in 1990. The epidemic started to develop rapidly in 1993 (NAC 1999; Hellard and Hocking 2003; Nguyen et. al. 2001; McCoy et. al. 2004), and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS continues to increase steadily.

HIV/AIDS data for Viet Nam is derived from two main sources. First, HIV cases are reported from provinces to the AIDS Division within the Ministry of Health Central Level. These data come from mandatory and voluntary testing (mainly of fishermen). AIDS is diagnosed using an adaptation of the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for clinical diagnosis with a positive HIV test. Secondly, there is a National HIV Sentinel Surveillance (HSS) that has been implemented since 1994. This programme was initiated in order to monitor the HIV epidemic in Viet Nam. The HSS now encompasses 29 provinces and is administered in six populations: including injection drug users, female sex workers, male STD patients, tuberculosis patients, ante-natal care women, and military recruits (Nguyen et. al. 2001). Although the sampling methodology may vary from province to province, the data provides the only reliable estimate of the level and trend of the HIV epidemic in Viet Nam (McCoy, et. al. 2004).

According to the National AIDS Committee (NAC) there are over 67,100 reported cases of HIV infections, 10,200 clinically diagnosed AIDS cases and 5,700 AIDS related deaths as of 31 June 2003 (NASB 2003; McCoy et. al. 2004). The Ministry of Health of Viet Nam estimates that the actual numbers of HIV infections are significantly higher, with approximately 150,000 HIV infections, 23,000 AIDS cases and 20,000 AIDS-related deaths (MOH AIDS division, July 16, 2003; MOH AIDS division Presentation, 2003; Chung A, 2001).

From 1990 to 1992, a limited number of infections were found in female sex workers and injecting drug users (IDUs) (McCoy et. al. 2004). The epidemic grew significantly from 1993 onwards, with sharp increases in the sex worker population and most

notably in IDU populations (McCoy et. al. 2004). From 1996 to 1997, the incidence of HIV doubled and the prevalence extended to 57 out of 61 provinces (Nguyen et. al. 2001; Chung A 2001).

Viet Nam is currently in what is commonly termed, the 'concentrated' stage of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The majority of infections are concentrated in high-risk behaviour populations, and HIV has not yet spread extensively to the general population (Nguyen et. al. 2003). However, HIV/AIDS is geographically widespread as infections have been reported in all 61 provinces of Viet Nam as of 1998 (NASB 2003; MOH 2001).

According to the National HIV Surveillance Study, as of August 2002 the infection rates are: IDUs: 30%, SWs: 5.63%, military recruits: 1.31%, and pregnant women: 0.34%. According to the NAC, the majority of HIV infections are among injecting drug users. Approximately 64% (of the 67,100) reported HIV infections are the result of unsafe injecting drug behaviours (Nguyen et. al. 2001). Unsafe sexual behaviours and injection use practices continue to be prevalent countrywide. Sharing of needles is very common amongst injection drug users (Nguyen et. al. 2001). The highest IDU prevalence rates are in Hai Phong, Quang Ninh, Ho Chi Minh City, Ha Noi and Hai Duong provinces (National AIDS Standing Bureau 2002). The epidemic in the north is due in large part to IDUs who are much younger (16-25 years) and have more sexual encounters with sex workers (National AIDS Committee 1999). According to the NAC, this pattern has increased the risk and the spread of HIV in northern communities.

Data on high risk behaviours in the Behavioural Surveillance Survey (BSS), conducted by Family Health International Viet Nam, found that IDUs continue to share injection equipment, with an average of 28% of IDUs sharing equipment in the six months before the interview (Nguyen et. al. 2001). Cases of HIV among IDUs remain the highest reported cases of HIV in Viet Nam. However, the proportion among total cases reported is decreasing (currently 60%), with the number of sexually transmitted transmissions increasing (Nguyen et. al. 2001; McCoy et. al. 2004).

Other populations fuelling the HIV epidemic include sex workers and clients of sex workers. HIV prevalence among sex workers has increased from 0.6% in 1994 to 5.63% in 2002 (MOH AIDS 2003). Migrant workers are an important group of contributors to the HIV epidemic. In the south-west provinces bordering Cambodia, migrant populations travelling to and from Cambodia such as sex workers and tradesmen have been infected with HIV (NAC 1999). In addition, mobile populations

such as truck drivers, fishermen and sex workers have limited education and little to no knowledge of HIV/AIDS and its prevention (McCoy et. al. 2004).

Sex work is said to stimulate the HIV/AIDS epidemic, yet limited data is available on the number of sex workers in Viet Nam. Some estimate that there are from 56,000 to 300,000, although these numbers are not reliable. There is even more limited information available on sex workers who are injection drug users (Hellard and Hocking 2003).

As in Thailand, sex workers in Viet Nam report relatively high rates of condom use. In Hai Phong Province, karaoke-based sex workers reported 75.5% condom use with 'one-time' clients in the past year (Nguyen et. al. 2001). However, this number is reduced to 59% for regular clients and further declines to less than 20% with non-paying partners (Nyugen et. al. 2001). In addition, when sex workers were asked if a condom was used throughout the entire intercourse (commonly condoms are used only prior to ejaculation), the levels of use become even lower (Hong 1998).

Despite the fact that there has been quantitative assessment on HIV/AIDS in Viet Nam, there has been limited research on the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. However, the NASB suggest that the epidemic will 'seriously challenge Viet Nam's socio-economic development, its cultural values, its traditions and the country's development in general' (Chung A 2001).

## **2.4 The Local Context for this Study**

### **2.4.1 Hai Phong**

Hai Phong is the second largest city in northern Viet Nam with a population of 1.3 million people. Hai Phong is divided into 13 districts and townships. It has a transportation system which includes Viet Nam railways, an international harbour, and an airport.

HIV infection was first found in Hai Phong in 1993, but the rise in cases was slow. By 1997 there were only 17 known HIV infections in Hai Phong Province. By September 30, 2002, however, figures from the AIDS Division, Ministry of Health, show a cumulative total of 4,783 HIV positive cases, including 786 cases of AIDS, of which 233 have died.

National HIV Surveillance Study (HSS) 2001 population-specific HIV positive findings for Hai Phong included: IDUs at 72.75%, female sex workers at 7.75%, STI patients at 7.25%, TB patients at 6.34%, antenatal women at .50% and new military recruits at 2.02% (Nguyen et. al. 2000).

The BSS interviewed a population-based sample of 326 IDUs from various sites in Hai Phong. The survey indicated that more than half (54%) of IDUs surveyed were between the ages of 20-29 years. Fifteen percent of IDUs visited sex workers (SWs) in the last 12 months and only 55% of IDUs who visited SWs consistently used condoms every time during the past 12 months. The IDUs interviewed had one sex partner on average during the last 12 months. BSS data indicates that only 1% of Karaoke-based sex workers reported ever using drugs. However, 19% of street based sex workers reported using drugs (Nguyen et. al. 2001; Rushing R 2001; McCoy et al. 2004).

#### **2.4.2 History of Sex Work in Society in Viet Nam**

Sex work is not a new concept in Viet Nam. However, it began to appear more pronounced in Viet Nam during the French occupation and flourished (chiefly in the South) during the Viet Nam/American war. Sex work was (and is) much less pronounced in northern Viet Nam as it was strictly controlled and prohibited by the government (Le Bach 2002). With the opening of the doors of Viet Nam during the Doi Moi, sex work began a renewed resurgence throughout the country's urban areas.

Historically, sex work is found in Vietnamese literature in the sixteenth century *Tale of Kieu*. This story recounts the tale of a young woman who is forced to sell herself in order to save her family. "*Tale of Kieu* conveys the filial piety Vietnamese society expects of children – the idea that they have to do anything to repay a moral debt to their parents" (Hong 1997; Le Bach 2002).

In Viet Nam, sex work is conducted from two main venues. The first is from an entertainment venue such as a karaoke bar<sup>1</sup>, hotel, or restaurant; the girls who work here are considered 'indirect' sex workers. Indirect sex workers are commonly younger,

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<sup>1</sup> Karaoke-based sex workers are defined as women who meet their clients in entertainment establishments such as karaoke bars, coffee and tea bars, and beer bars. They are considered to be indirect sex workers who work in various establishments selling drinks or food, but earning much of their income through sex work with clients they meet at the establishments (Nyugen et. al. 2001).



prettier and fairer skinned. The second venue is street based; these girls are categorised as 'direct' sex workers. Generally, the girls begin work at an entertainment venue and move (within a year or two) to direct sex work as they begin to 'mature' (Brown 2001).

As sex work is illegal in Viet Nam, brothels are not officially recognised. Therefore, these entertainment establishments mask approximately 70% of all sex work according to the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) (2000; Elmer 2001; Walters 2003).

## **2.5 The Government Response to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic**

The government has responded to the epidemic through the formation of the National AIDS Committee and Department of Social Evils (explained in the next section). While international non-government organisations have tried to encourage the government to take a more public health approach of intervention and education.

From the start of the epidemic, the Vietnamese government has been determined to reduce levels of HIV/AIDS transmission. The government established the National AIDS Committee (NAC) (now the National AIDS Standing Bureau (NASB)) within the Ministry of Health in 1990. A proposal to strengthen the organisation of the NAC and its networks was approved in 1994. The NAC was then detached from the Ministry of Health (MOH) and placed under the direct control of the Government with the Vice-Prime Minister, Chung A, acting as chairman of NAC. The NAC appropriates financial resources and manages the national program on HIV/AIDS. There are 61 Provincial AIDS Committees (PAC) at the local level and mass organisation focal points which deliver AIDS services and HIV prevention (NAC 1999).

In June 2000, the National Committee for AIDS Prevention and for Drug and Prostitution Control (NCADP) was formed after merging the former Government Steering Committee for Social Evils, the National Drug Control Committee and the National AIDS Committee. The development of the NCADP occurred in order to better co-ordinate and collaborate activities related to HIV/AIDS prevention and control of prostitution and drug abuse (Chung A 2001).

The government developed a national plan of objectives for AIDS prevention and control through 2005. The general objectives are as follows: 1) To prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS transmission among population communities; 2) to slow down the development from HIV to AIDS and; 3) to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS on the socio-economic development of Viet Nam (Chung A 2001).

### **2.5.1 Non-Government Organisation Response**

It is only in the past ten years that many non-government organisations (NGOs) have started to work in Viet Nam. This was on the invitation of the government after the HIV/AIDS epidemic began to accelerate in the mid-1990s. They were invited to work with the 'concentrated high-risk populations'. In this way, several NGOs have taken the lead in research and in the implementation of programmes regarding HIV/AIDS. In collaboration with government partners, these NGOs take a public health based approach to promoting condom use among sex workers, and to reduce needle sharing among IDUs. Family Health International (FHI) is the main NGO working on HIV, conducting research (including the Behavioural Surveillance Survey), and developing programmes on harm reduction and education for sex workers and drug users. DKT International is a condom social marketing NGO. DKT works closely with the government advocating condom use and distribution to non-traditional outlets such as cigarette stands and restaurants. DKT works closely with sex workers in settings where the sex industry is concentrated. World Vision International recently began peer outreach projects working with sex workers in Do Son and Thien Loi.

## **2.6 The 'Social Evils' Policy of Viet Nam**

Despite the government's commitment to combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the current approach applied by the Vietnamese government is known as the 'social evils' approach. Social evils are taken to be behaviours or persons that negatively affect society. Traditionally, these included sex work, drug use, and gambling. However, more recently HIV/AIDS and condoms have also been deemed social evils (McCoy et. al. 2004).

According to the national ordinance on HIV/AIDS, sex work/prostitution is a "serious 'social evil'" which "badly effects social security" (Nguyen T.L. 2003). In addition, prostitution is highly stigmatised as "it violates traditional moral standards and causes bad consequences for families and society" (Hong 1999; Nguyen T.L. 2003). However,

there is a gendered nature to the blame. While sex work is considered a serious social evil and is highly stigmatised, the men using the services of sex workers are not considered part of this 'social evil'.

The government of Viet Nam has established an extensive programme for eliminating prostitution (and other 'social evils'). The programme includes:

- Education and propaganda campaigns
- Investigating the situation and building databases
- Police actions
- Vocational training, employment creation and poverty alleviation aimed at sex workers
- Rehabilitation and reintegration of former sex workers into the community
- Institutional capacity building at both central and local levels
- Building social evils-free communities
- International cooperation for combating prostitution (Le Bach 2002).

The government has produced laws aimed at controlling social evils, including the resolution on the prevention and control of prostitution (Ref: 05), and the government resolution on the prevention and control of drugs (Ref: 06) (Nguyen T.L. 2003: Chung A 2001). These laws entitle police and other authorities to 'arrest' sex workers and drug users and place them in centres for 'rehabilitation'. The government has opened rehabilitation centres (formerly referred to as forced rehabilitation camps). The rehabilitation centres are called 05/06 centres, relating to the government resolutions Ref. 05 and Ref 06. There are 43 rehabilitation centres and re-education camps throughout Viet Nam (Reid and ARHN 1999).

In practice, the social evil's approach encompasses interventions such as rounding up sex workers and injection drug users and placing them in forced rehabilitation centres for one year. Many female sex workers and drug users spend between one to two years in rehabilitation (05/06) centres. Many of the IDUs and female sex workers that are HIV positive remain in the centres as they lack families to provide care for them as the virus progresses to AIDS. In addition, a number of the HIV positive residents choose to stay in the centres rather than face the high level of discrimination and stigmatisation they may experience in their community (Rushing 2001f; McCoy et. al. 2004). The centres continue to use the government anti-social evils approach when dealing with centre residents. However, more recently non-government organisations

have been working with the government and the centre staff to incorporate a harm reduction approach when working with both sex workers and IDU residents. Residents are taught HIV/AIDS education and prevention skills as well as safe injection and safe sex practices. However, such interventions employed to advocate harm reduction activities are perceived by some authorities as condoning rather than preventing social evils (Parsons et. al. 2002).

Consequently, the overall response to HIV/AIDS in Viet Nam is complex. The government response to sex work, drug use and HIV/AIDS is through a social evils framework. NGOs strive to counteract this approach with a public health based approach of prevention and education. While the government remains resolute that the Social Evils policy is just and necessary, they are also willing to permit NGOs to educate sex workers, drug users and other high-risk populations on safe sexual and injection practices. The government often struggles to find the balance between Western ideas of harm reduction and the Vietnamese ideology of social evils and re-education.

## **2.7 Doi Moi and Its Impact on Social Norms**

In 1986, Viet Nam began a profound social and economic change and/or renovation, termed “Doi Moi”. The Communist Party initiated the Doi Moi with the intention to develop a market economy in order to stimulate economic productivity, ‘but keep the social and political structure of the country intact’ (Nguyen T.L. 2003; Wagstaff et. al. 2002.; Chung A, 2001). The economic reform appears to have been successful, as Viet Nam’s overall economic growth rate has been high (8%) (as of 2001), making it one of the fastest growing economies in the region (Vu Ngoc Binh 2002; Chung A, 2001).

Nearly all literature based on Viet Nam cites the Doi Moi as a significant factor in the development of the country. The Doi Moi and the opening of Viet Nam to the world market have been both advantageous and detrimental to Vietnamese society. The advantages include an increase in the Vietnamese economy, including additional jobs and industries. However, the detriments encompass areas of social degradation, introduction of school fees and health service fees, and the ever-widening gap between rural and urban economies (Kaime-Atterhog 2000; Le Bach 2002).

In addition, much of Viet Nam's wealth rests within the larger cities. The widening gap of prosperous urban areas and poorer rural areas has caused significant migration from rural to urban areas (Hellard and Hocking 2003). Migration from poorer rural provinces and communes to the cities in search of work is a common occurrence. In addition, in select provinces, migration is government sponsored<sup>2</sup>. This is in contrast to patterns of migration pre-Doi Moi.

Historically, a system of public/communal land was the norm. High values were placed on 'the protection of the spirit of the community', traditional values and respect for nation and community (Havanon and Archavanitkul 1997). During this time, more stringent government doctrines (regulations regarding the restricting of mobility) helped to assure close ties between communities, families and households. It was this former 'community spirit' that afforded the well-being of all its members (van de Walle 1998). However, the new economic reform has been attributed with a dramatic shift not only in the economy, but more notably in the culture of Viet Nam. It has been noted by the government to affect negatively all aspects of Vietnamese life, including family relations and traditional values, potentially leading to an increase in social evils (Nguyen T.L. 2003; Wagstaff and Nguyen N. 2002).

The new market economy has also been said to weaken the social welfare of families, creating a dependence on urban job opportunities and economy. The traditional safety nets that were once in place have depleted significantly, leaving families and predominantly women and children to suffer the burden. In particular, the swift economic development in Viet Nam has left women and girls faced with recently emerging social issues, such as increased independent mobility and household reliance of wage earnings, which they previously may not have experienced (Vu Ngoc Binh 2002). The Doi Moi then can be argued to play in two directions, it helps people survive without selling sex, but it also makes money more attractive and needed.

The increase in wealth in the cities has also given rise to increased monetary expectations at the village level; these expectations and needs are both real and perceived. They also infiltrate the family's economic decisions based on survival or, more commonly, material wealth (Le Bach 2002). Poverty alleviation programmes

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<sup>2</sup> The government of Viet Nam began a sponsorship of migration during the economic reform to alleviate poverty in rural areas. The government sponsorship programme pays a family 2 million Vietnamese dong to relocate to new economic zones (factory areas) in order to work and set-up a household.

aimed at reducing the gap between rich and poor have had limited success. Villagers continue to migrate to urban areas in search of job opportunities (Rushing 2002).

While the government views the Doi Moi as a positive asset to the development of Viet Nam, it also recognises that it has brought about these recent negative changes, including social evils in society. The government maintains a policy of encouraging migration, but government sponsored migration must occur with permission and documentation. The majority of migration (especially youth migration) does not occur in this way. The government migration policy was set in place to reduce poverty in rural areas. However, often this has not assisted in reducing poverty, as it potentially adds to the loss of labour force at the rural level. So while the government encourages migration as a means to alleviate poverty, it also recognises that these new policies affect the society and promote 'social evils'. In this way, problems and solutions appear to perpetuate each other. In addition, strict government regulations often hamper efforts by NGOs to work in rural areas. The few NGOs working at the rural level to prevent migration often do so through the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes.

Universally, literature from both Viet Nam and regionally cites poverty and indebtedness as the principal reasons for child/youth migration (Anker and Melkas 1996). While poverty is most commonly reported, some authors emphasise that it is not the sole impetus for migration. The decision to migrate, the migration process and eventual exploitation of girls are complex issues influenced by various contextual factors and coping strategies (which will be described in the following chapters).

## **2.8 Perceived Risk and Vulnerability**

Young women who migrate to rural areas are vulnerable to many risks. Risk is viewed and processed differently by everyone. However, for young sex workers placed in high risk situations risk is a balancing act. "When risk is viewed as a balancing act, it becomes easier to appreciate that many individuals take risks not through ignorance or incompetence, but after consciously weighing-up the rewards against the risk" (Richens, Imrie and Copas 2000). In addition, emotional or socio-cultural processes for deciding to engage in high-risk behaviours, such as sex work, often obstruct young women's capacity to make healthy choices (Williams et. al. 2000; Richard et al. 1995;

Nzioka 1996; De Witt et al. 1997; Poppen & Reisen 1997). Additionally, in Viet Nam, self-perception of risk may be altered by filial piety (Schunter 2002).

Sex workers are highly stigmatised (Kaime-Atterhog 2000; Le Bach 2002). Yet they are, of course, useful to many in society. However, the same people that use them for sex or exploit them for monetary gain look down upon them. In Viet Nam, sex work is a social evil, therefore sex workers are seen as the proliferators of evils in society. In this way, it is nearly impossible to reintegrate into village life. The stigmatisation of sex workers hinders reintegration efforts by the individual and increases their chances of remaining marginalised from their community and society (Le Bach 2002).

Sex workers are expected to entertain many customers per day, seven days a week. They are exposed to HIV/AIDS, STIs, pregnancy, social evils round-ups, and the possibility of their families discovering their occupation and the eventual shame and stigma (Le Bach 2002). They are also exposed to high-risk situations such as unprotected sex, harassment, and violence.

### **2.8.1 HIV**

Sex workers worldwide are more vulnerable to HIV due to their work environment. Numerous factors increase their risk of contracting HIV. Two main factors are violence and lack of condom use. Both may be related to weak negotiation skills and position. Literature purposes that both of these are influenced by gender and powerlessness.

Universally, literature cites sex workers as key players in the transmission of HIV/AIDS. They are believed to be remarkably exposed to HIV infection due to the number of sexual partners and in turn, sex workers infected with HIV may then spread the virus to their clients (Day, Ward and Harris 1988). In this way, sex workers are commonly referred to as a 'high-risk' group for both HIV/STI transmission and acquisition (Varga 1997).

Violence is another areas that can increase a woman's risk through non-consensual sex or by limiting her inclination or capability to get her partner to use a condom (Heise 1994). Therefore, it is vital to know how far individuals are able to resist unwanted sexual activity or to shape the terms upon which it takes place (Wallman 1998). In the negotiation of condom use and safe sex, personal power is essential (UNAIDS 2002). 'A condom is only as strong as the capacity to negotiate its use' (Wallman 1998).

Although some sex workers may report condom use with clients (even if inconsistent), they frequently do not report the use of condoms with boyfriends, regular partners or lovers (Liao 1998; Varga 1997). The nature of the non-client relationship is commonly expressed through this behaviour (Brown 2001). Condom use in intimate, personal sex circumstances is viewed as disrespecting the trust and emotions associated with the non-client relationship. In this way, sex workers can disassociate their work from their personal lives through unprotected sexual behaviour (Varga 1997).

In a largely unstable environment, sex workers may seek out personal 'love' relationships. Within these relationships sex workers feel the need to separate the act of sex with a client from the act of love with a partner. For this reason the bonding associated with unprotected sex is essential. It was found a study conducted in South Africa that the act of unprotected sex with a 'boyfriend' was so meaningful that condoms were not used even in situations where one partner was known or suspected of being HIV positive (Varga 1997). Therefore the emotional benefits of unprotected sex far outweigh any perceptions or realities of risk.

In addition to condom negotiation with intimate partners and perceived risk, within the drug environment, care and responsibility may present different meanings associated with risk management. A relationship in which one member is a sex worker (and potentially a drug user) and her male partner is also a drug user is deemed a 'high-risk' relationship. Sexual transmission of HIV in Viet Nam occurs mainly between partners of male IDUs. This is further complicated when both partners are IDUs and/or the female partner is also a sex worker (Beesey et. al. 2001).

In a survey conducted in the Mekong Sub-region by Prybylski (1999), commercial sex workers interviewed were predominantly young, uneducated, poor women and girls from rural areas. Sex workers are at a heightened risk for acquiring HIV due to the fact that they service many sexual contacts per day and use condoms inconsistently. Sex workers, especially those new to the sex industry, are also most vulnerable to becoming HIV infected during their first six months of sex work, when they have minimal bargaining power (Kilmark et. al. 1998).

Their entry into a high-risk situation is frequently characterized by powerlessness and limited to no control over their sexual lives and well-being (Zwi and Cabral 1991). Many young sex workers are faced with immediate matters such as instability, loss of family



environment, forced sex, violence, and social exclusion. In light of this, the risk of AIDS does not emerge high on their list of priorities (Brown 2001; Wallman 1998,2001).

As a result, sexually transmitted infections among sex worker populations continue to increase. As the prevalence of STIs is an indicator for unprotected sex this is a significant concern for a potential HIV/AIDS epidemic. While the government is working toward an ameliorative effort for STIs, laws forbidding sex work are not effectively enforced (Beesey et. al. 2001).

### **2.8.2 Sex Work and Violence**

Literature indicates that violence is a reoccurring theme and constant threat for sex workers, especially migrant sex workers who are young and not familiar with their environment. "Violence, confinement, coercion, deception and exploitation can and do occur within migration and employment" (Anderson and O'Connell 2003). Migrant sex workers are commonly forced into situations of fear, violence and dependency on their pimp (hotel/karaoke bar owner). Violence is also used as a means of control or subordination by both pimps and clients (Vu Ngoc Binh 2002).

Violence towards sex workers is often justified through the perception of a sex worker as an employee who needs to be controlled or as a service provider of all forms of sex and fulfilment. Clients often view sex workers as purchased merchandise and through payment for services, the girls 'belong' to them (Anderson and O'Connell 2003). Sex workers, particularly migrant sex workers, are customarily thought of as non-entities. They do not belong to the community in which they work, and their sole purpose is to satisfy the demands of a client. By dehumanising them, clients may exonerate their treatment of sex workers as objects.

The idea that violence and rape can be perpetrated against a sex worker is a new concept (Garcia-Moreno and Watts 2000). Additionally, a more recent concept is the examination of the health and welfare of sex workers. In stating this, it must be said that globally, literature most commonly explores the issue of violence and health from an HIV/AIDS framework. The ways of thinking with these ideas and issues are not currently being brought together to address the interplay of all variables effecting a sex worker's life. More importantly is the missing link between violence perpetrated during the entire process from migration to sexual exploitation. The literature discusses violence of sex workers by clients and pimps and thus her increased risk and

vulnerability. However, literature rarely discusses the multiple factors acting at various levels in their lives of young women sex workers that are also equally exploitative and damaging.

Historically research has not placed importance on the larger role of sexuality in the context of the life of individuals in specific cultures and societies (Gagnon 1988). Since the beginning of the epidemic, data collection has centred on issues associated with biological HIV transmission, such as prevention through use of the barrier method, rather than the broader social and psychological conditions of the sex worker's life as they influence transmission or behaviour change (Gagnon 1988).

The fact is that all humans are biologically susceptible to HIV, and transmission occurs through the behavioural acts of specific individuals. However, an extended concept of social factors that fix some individuals and groups in situations of increased vulnerability has more fully enabled the perception of the ways in which social inequality and injustice, prejudice and discrimination, oppression, exploitation, and violence continue to function in ways that have precipitated the spread of the HIV epidemic especially in the population of young migrant women (Parker 1996).

Focusing on the question of social vulnerability of young women may bring about a better understanding of consequences, with regard to HIV/AIDS, and of the sexual stigma and discrimination faced by these young women (Parker 1996). Poverty, powerlessness and stigmatisation create an environment ripe for exploitation. In this environment, young women often have limited choices over their lives and well-being (Haour-Knipe and Grondin 2003).

## **2.9 Conclusion**

The government of Viet Nam has put forth an effort to address issues such as poverty, injection drug use, sex work and HIV/AIDS. However, while the government appears to be committed to ameliorative efforts, interventions related to 'social evils' are often stigmatising and detrimental to those they are trying to serve. In this way, policies and societal beliefs may be more harmful than helpful.

The political ideals of the Vietnamese government in working with high-risk populations such as sex workers and drug users often complicates already difficult issues. Instead of viewing HIV as a detrimental consequence of sex work, it is grouped together with sex work as a social evil. Additionally, the government and many others commonly

blame the Doi Moi for increased social evils in society. However, the government also encourages rural to urban migration. From the government's viewpoint, an increase in migration generally produces an increase in 'social evils'. As a result, the government response may perpetuate the problem.

Despite the range of organisations and research on migration and sex work, there has been limited studies and literature on the connection between rural to urban migration with sex work and HIV vulnerability. There has been even more limited focus by NGOs in addressing rural migration leading to sexual exploitation. However, in order for programmes and research to be effective, migration, sexual exploitation and HIV should not be treated as separate entities. All aspects of a young woman's life need to be addressed comprehensively.

### **3 Processes Leading to Migration and Sex Work in Viet Nam: A Literature Review**

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#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the main conceptual frameworks used to develop the framework for this study and presents the study's conceptual framework. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the ecological model, a framework used to reflect the multiple factors acting at different levels. It reflects how the process of migration and eventual entry into sex work are influenced by society and community, in addition to family decision-making processes. The second framework discusses the numerous push and pull factors that facilitate a young woman's migration and entry into sex work. Lastly, the third framework used to develop this study's conceptual framework, a Vietnamese model, is discussed.

#### **3.2 The Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework developed for this study draws on three frameworks. The first is an ecological model used increasingly to help conceptualise the causes of complex health issues such as intimate partner violence and the multifaceted nature of violence (Heise et. al. 1999). The ecological model was developed in the late 1970s and was originally applied to child abuse, youth violence, intimate partner violence and elder abuse. The model is used to investigate the relationship between individuals and contextual factors. In this way, the ecological model considers the area under study (exploitation) as the consequence of multiple levels of influence on behaviour (Krug, E., et. al., 2002).

The ecological model for this study, represented as a set of concentric circles, (see as the top section of the diagram (Fig. 2)) highlights that multiple factors at various levels influence a person's situation and vulnerability to a particular health problem or risk.

The second framework used for this study was a push and pull framework. This framework is used in migration to conceptualise the factors that push an individual from one place to another (nationally or internationally) (Zimmerman, 1994). The push and

pull section of the conceptual framework for this study is represented by the bottom section of figure 2.

The third model used to develop the conceptual framework for this study was designed for a Vietnamese study on child<sup>3</sup> prostitution in Viet Nam for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) by Le Bach Duong. Le Bach's framework also aims to illustrate how factors at the societal, communal, familial and individual level affect a child's vulnerability to sexual exploitation (see Appendix P), and explicitly focused on Viet Nam.

While Le Bach's model captures numerous aspects leading children into prostitution, it does not include the use of communication processes at the family level nor additional push/pull and facilitating factors.

### 3.3 Development of Study Framework

The study framework began as two separate frameworks; an ecological model and a model of push and pull factors (see appendices R and S). These were then melded into one framework to conceptualise the study. This study's conceptual framework draws on the 3 frameworks described in that it was used to conceptualise the causes of migration and vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Figure 2 illustrates the influential processes involved at national, communal, familial and individual levels. It also includes key factors identified from the literature reviewed in the previous chapter.

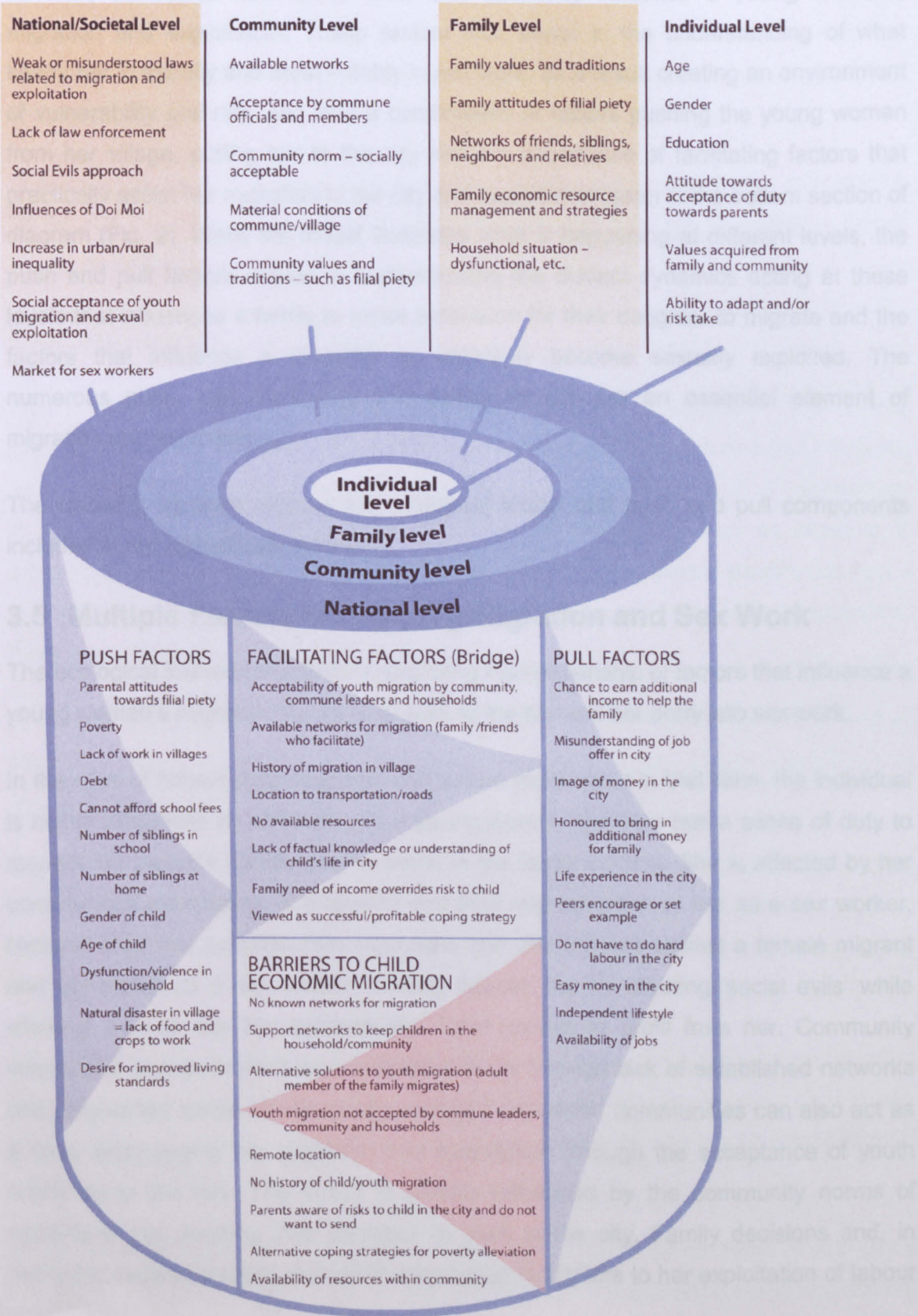
**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Multiple Factors of Migration and Sexual Exploitation in Viet Nam**

(please see following page)

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<sup>3</sup> A child was defined by Le Bach as a person between the ages of 13 – 18 years.

# Conceptual Framework of Multiple Factors of Migration and Sexual Exploitation in Viet Nam



### **3.4 Description of Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework seeks to illustrate that it is a combination of variables at the national, communal and family level that ultimately influence a young woman's migration and exploitation. These factors also assist in the understanding of what keeps her in the city and most notably in sex work, as a result creating an environment of vulnerability and risk. And how a combination of factors pushing the young woman from her village, pulling her to the city and the importance of facilitating factors that practically assist her migration to the city and exploitation (seen in the bottom section of diagram (Fig. 2). While the model illustrates what is happening at different levels, the push and pull factors assists in understanding the distinct dynamics acting at these levels that influences a family to make a decision for their daughter to migrate and the factors that influence a daughter to ultimately become sexually exploited. The numerous push, pull, facilitating and barrier factors are an essential element of migration and exploitation.

The following sections discuss the ecological model and push and pull components included in the conceptual framework.

### **3.5 Multiple Factors Influencing Migration and Sex Work**

The ecological framework assists in exploring the relationship of factors that influence a young woman's migration from a rural area to the city and her entry into sex work.

In the case of female child migration and sexual exploitation in Viet Nam, the individual is highly influenced by all levels. As a young woman she may feel a sense of duty to respect her parent's wishes and to assist in the family income. She is affected by her community's acceptance of migration and their stigmatisation of her as a sex worker. National laws and policies often stigmatise and discriminate against a female migrant and her status as a sex worker. Society blames her for creating 'social evils' while allowing men to use her services and hotel owners to profit from her. Community values and norms may act as a protective factor through lack of established networks and heightened sense of community cohesion. However, communities can also act as a force encouraging her migration and exploitation through the acceptance of youth migration to the city. The family is greatly influenced by the community norms of sending or not sending their daughter to work in the city. Family decisions and, in particular, networks within the community act as facilitators to her exploitation of labour

in the city. Therefore, the conceptual framework assists in the understanding of how these multiple levels influence a young woman's situation and vulnerability to migration and sexual exploitation.

Migration and exploitation of young women rarely act in isolation. Rather they are intrinsic in the interplay of many factors at the societal (or national), communal, familial, and individual levels.

The following describes how factors acting at different levels (society, community, family and individual) influence the decision to migrate and young women's risk of sexual exploitation.

### **3.5.1 National/Societal Level**

The framework illustrates the various levels influencing migration and sexual exploitation of young women in Viet Nam. At the National/Societal level factors include: weak or misunderstood laws related to migration and exploitation, lack of enforcement of the laws, influences of the Doi Moi – which in turn has caused an increase in urban/rural inequity, social acceptance of youth migration and sexual exploitation and a market demand for sex work while using a 'social evils approach' to policy intervention. All of these factors are discussed below.

Government policies, cultural norms and traditions, in addition to family and individual decision-making, influence the likelihood of the migration and sexual exploitation of young migrant women.

The philosophy ingrained in society (most notably Ho Chi Minh's communist philosophy) is an essential element of life in Viet Nam. The 'community spirit' is commonly mixed with national pride. The unity and solidarity of Vietnamese society is credited for overthrowing foreign invaders and the development of a strong nation.

The rapid increase of the economy and development due to the Doi Moi has also been blamed for negative consequences to society. As a result, rapid urban growth and government sponsored migration contribute to the migration and labour exploitation of rural areas (Rushing 2002).

National laws aimed at protecting youth, such as labour laws which forbid certain forms of labour under the age of 15 and 16 years of age, are not well understood and are not



commonly enforced. The Committee for Population, Families and Children (CPFC) is also meant to protect families and children (see list of duties in appendix M), however, the recent formation of the CPFC may have led to lack of protection of children/youth migrating for employment.

In addition, laws and policies related to social evils (discussed in the previous chapter) often stigmatise young migrants and sex workers in particular. Thus preventing young migrants from seeking social services.

Social norms and values evolve over time, but, unfortunately, social norms do not always protect members of society or consider their best interest. Social norms may facilitate youth migration and sexual exploitation through acceptance or ambivalence. Therefore, a family may be more inclined to send their daughter to the city if it was deemed socially acceptable. While social norms can work as a protective factor they may also serve as a facilitating factor creating a demand and market for sex worker. While the department of social evils works against this demand, sex work and sexual exploitation of young women continues in Viet Nam.

Social norms often dictate a community's or individual's behaviour, if something is deemed socially unacceptable it is less likely to occur, such is the case with employing youth migration for supplementing the family income. Hirschman (in Basu 1998) states that the parent's decision to send a child to work in the city is to some extent a matter of social norms. If stigma for sending the child is greater than the need for income, the parent will most likely not send. However, if the stigma for sending a child is minimal or does not exist, then sending the child and receiving an additional income far outweighs any risk to the child. In this way, the literature suggests that norms and values within society and community are significant determinants of a parent's decision to send, or not send a child to the city.

### **3.5.2 Community**

The literature highlights that a number of community level factors facilitate migration and exploitation. The community in Viet Nam is extremely important. Each province is broken into several communes. It is at this level that laws, policies and decisions are made and enforced. Commune leaders are respected and set the tone for the community.

The community is also significant in Vietnamese ideology and culture. The social welfare of families and their members is substantially defined by the community's material conditions. In this way, the community significantly influences the economic and social decisions at the family level. "Beliefs, traditions, values and customs are crucial for community cohesion, either good or bad, and contribute to the socialisation of family and individuals" (Le Bach 2002). Therefore, traditional values can be both protective and risk factors for migration and entry into sex work.

Communities play an essential role in determining the level and extent of child migration for labour (Rushing 2002). Included in this, is the extent to which individuals, parents, and communities assign significance to education, and the roles of male and female children (Archavanitkul 1998; Anker 2000).

These factors include the consent and/or acceptance by commune leaders and community members. Sending communities are those that send children to the city, they are commonly rural communities. In addition, sending communities generally have distinct social, cultural and political characteristics which promote child migration. These characteristics include poverty (commonly due to overpopulation, flooding, infertile land, etc.), political or social indifference, and social exclusion (ILO/IPEC 1998).

Receiving communities are areas, commonly urban cities, which receive migrants. These communities also promote migration and exploitation as unskilled migrants fill jobs that are not wanted by urban populations. It could be argued that it is also easier to exploit and dispose of someone who is considered an outsider. Therefore, the steady yet expendable supply of girls is advantageous for those profiting from their migration and sexual exploitation.

### **3.5.3 Family**

In the conceptual framework factors that were highlighted at the family level include family values and traditions – which may be facilitating or preventive to sending a child to the city, family attitudes of filial piety, and family income strategies. These are considered in the following sections.

It has been argued that the "family structure and organisation remains a primary level to understanding the nature of broader social dynamics in every society" (Hirschman

and Vu 1994). In addition, the family is the child's 'immediate social space' (Le Bach 2002). In Viet Nam, the family is an extremely important component of the social unit, with established hierarchies and responsibilities.

The family unit in Viet Nam has been influenced by many cultures, religious and political dogma, and war. Confucianism is practiced in Viet Nam. According to the ideology of Confucianism, family hierarchy was strictly obeyed.

A 'wife must obey her husband, the children must obey their parents and relatives of superior ages; and the individual's interests must be submissive to the family's interests' (Havanon and Archavanitkul 1997). The ideals set forth by Confucian ideology are ingrained in cultural norms.

Children in Viet Nam are taught that they must respect and obey their elders, including family and community members.

These relationships can be summed up by the following Vietnamese proverb: "The father's achievement is as great as Thai Son mountain, the mother's good deeds are like water that flows from the source; children should venerate their mother and father, and show filial piety towards their parents" (Havanon and Archavanitkul 1997). The Confucian philosophy of filial piety, the sense of duty towards one's parents (Le Bach 2002; Schunter 2001), is an essential element that shapes families' values and decisions for their children in Viet Nam.

### **3.5.4 Family Decision-making**

A child's life in Viet Nam, as in other parts of the world, often revolves around the decisions of the family. Family level decision-making is commonly based on household resources, education, labour and gender. The division of labour and power within the family is interrelated with gender. Those with the most power (generally the father) assert their decision-making power over the household with regard to education, access to resources and labour. Family members with less power, such as girls, may then have less control over resources and their ultimate fate (Napaporn and Archavanitkul 1997). It is precisely these decisions at the family level that are key factors in a child's migration and exploitation (Le Bach 2002).

Decision-making models are used by economists to illustrate the allocation of time and resources within the family (Edmonds and Turk 2002; Anker 2000). They assume that the head of household will make decisions based on what is best for the entirety of the family (Anker 2000). Therefore, understanding the decision-making process within a family is vital to the migration process for both protective and risk factors. It is necessary to understand not only the decision-making process at the family level and its impact on the family but also to comprehend the effect community variables have on the household's decision (Anker 2000).

In developing countries, children are often viewed as an economic and labour resource for many families (Siddiqi and Patrinos 1995). In Viet Nam, following the Doi Moi, many families cannot afford school fees, nor can they afford the loss of labour force necessary for children to remain in school (Ravallion and Wodon 1999; van de Walle 1998). As a result, many children in Viet Nam are taken out of school by their parents and encouraged to migrate to the city to find employment in order to assist the family. When a family can no longer afford school fees, and does not place importance on education, a child is in danger of migration and potentially to exploitation. Parents employ their child's migration as a means of survival or increased income while, knowingly or unknowingly, exposing their daughter to increased risks associated with her new environment (Kaime-Atterhog 2000).

Universally, literature cites parents as the responsible party for the decision for their child's migration. Children are recurrently urged to migrate and work by their parents. A global study on child labour found that parents represented 62% of the source of induction into employment (Siddiqi and Patrinos 1995). "Almost all the provocations that led children into prostitution can ultimately be traced to processes at the family level" (Le Bach 2002).

Therefore, according to the literature, the parents appear to be one of the most influential factors in the decision to migrate. In addition to the environment within the family, other factors contribute directly to the migration and exploitation of female children. A range of family attributes may also include naïveté, ignorance or denial, poverty, family dysfunction and materialism (Kaime-Atterhog 2000; Le Bach 2002).

Family decision-making is influenced by societal beliefs such as a child's duty to the parents (filial piety) coupled with community acceptance; greatly influence a family's decision-making processes. As a result, many daughters are viewed as a tool to

increase family income through their work in the city. Thus, it can be argued that families have begun to employ this form of income as a practical and gainful means to supplement the family's earnings.

### **3.5.5 Individual**

The individual (female migrant) is highly influenced by all levels. The framework points out several areas which may influence a young woman's migration and potentially lead to her sexual exploitation. Factors included in the framework and discussed here include: age, gender, education, values acquired from the family and community and a young woman's ability to adapt to her situation.

As a young woman she feels a sense of duty to respect her parent's wishes and to assist in the family income (Schunter 2001; Le Bach 2002). She has been affected by her community's acceptance of migration with known risks.

Other facilitating factors that lead to migration and exploitation include the lack of awareness of the working conditions or of the realities of sex work; physically, psychologically and emotionally. The availability of networks and contacts, friends in particular – whether through observed affluence upon returning to the village or direct encouragement, are essential to her migration and entry into sex work (Raymond et. al. 2002; Kelly and Le Bach 1999).

Other factors include her age, the number of siblings in the house and in school, the family situation and her perceptions of obligations to the family (Rushing 2002). While children are influenced by their family's judgments; families are influenced by the community, and the community by the society in which they live.

## **3.6 Push and Pull Factors**

The other element of the framework is the push and pull factors that influence migration and sexual exploitation at a range of levels.

The facilitating and influential factors have been described in the literature in the last sections. This section will focus on key push and pull factors that encourage and enable her migration and eventual entry into sex work.

### 3.7 Push Factors

The key push factors highlighted in the framework for this study include parental attitudes towards filial piety; perceptions of poverty – which may include lack of work in village, family debt, inability to afford school fees; demographic indicators such as number of children in school and at home, and child's age and gender; additionally factors such as household dysfunction and desire for improved standard of living are discussed in the following sections.

#### 3.7.1 Filial Piety

*“Having an elder daughter is better than having deep paddy fields and female buffaloes” Vietnamese proverb (Schunter 2001).*

Filial piety or obligation (the sense of duty towards one's parents) is primary to Confucian doctrine in Viet Nam (Le Bach 2002; Schunter 2001). In a study with Vietnamese female migrant sex workers in Cambodia, it was found through interviews with the sex workers, that their families understood the work their daughters would be doing in the sex industry and the possibility of exposure to high risk situations and social evils, yet parents still considered this a viable option for themselves and their daughters. Therefore, “to what extent does filial piety engender perceptions of risk” (Schunter 2001).

Many girls migrate ‘voluntarily’ or with encouragement from family, friends or relatives. The sense of obligation and responsibility as income earners for the family often results in the decision or acceptance of the parent's decision for the child to migrate (Kaime-Atterhog 2000). “Inadequacy of male income is a fact of life for the majority of households, as is the importance of women's earnings to the survival of many families” (Havanon and Archavanitkul 1997). As a result, numerous families draw upon their daughters' unskilled labour through migration to urban areas. While boys are also encouraged by their families to migrate, they are generally not exposed to sexual exploitation. Requesting a daughter to migrate and work of course has gender implications.

### **3.7.2 Facilitating Factors**

#### **Recruitment Networks**

Movement between villages and cities, rather than between countries, in South East Asia is significant. The majority of migration in Viet Nam takes place nationally, from village to village and more commonly from rural to urban areas. However, internal migration has received limited attention (Beesey et. al. 2001).

Literature throughout the Mekong Region often cites the importance of networks to a child's migration. Previous research suggests that elaborate networks form and create connected contacts between those in the village and those who have migrated to the city (Skeldon, 2000). Networks serve as the contact point to those who have not yet migrated, the job offer and idea of migrating for work while still in the village, and the passage of money (Skeldon, 2000).

Poverty is often blamed for migration of children throughout the literature. However, youth migration would not occur without networks. People would not be able to migrate without opportunities and networks that promote their migration and work. The recruitment and migration networks are commonly informal, through family, friends, or villagers (Vu Ngoc Binh 2002). Another more subtle form of recruitment includes the observation of girls returning to the village with material wealth, rousing interest in other families and girls interested in migrating for work (Raymond et. al. 2002).

The network of family, friends and relatives are the most influential source of induction to migration. However, of these three, literature suggest 'friends' as being the significant factor for introduction to work in the city, most notably sex work, while parents remain most influential in the decision-making process for migration.

### **3.8 Pull Factors**

The pull factors are what creates a demand for an individual to migrate to the city. The key factors discussed in this section comprise the job offer – its understanding at the village level and once in the city, honour to the family to bring in an additional income, and peers (or others) who encourage migration and sex work.

Universal literature agrees that the parents most often initiate the decision for their child to migrate. However, very little data exists on the parent's understanding of what their

daughter will do in the city and what challenges she will face, and, more importantly, on the young woman's understanding of her situation.

In a study by Le Bach of child prostitution in Viet Nam (2002), he reports that "there was no discussion found in the literature about young people's decision-making process". Although he did find in his study that almost half of the girls interviewed in northern Viet Nam stated that they made the decision themselves to work in the sex industry, while one-third of the girls felt they had been persuaded to make that decision. Le Bach does not indicate who persuaded the girls to make the decision, but based on the literature from similar studies in Asia and Viet Nam, parents and friends would be the most likely to persuade and facilitate the process. The facilitators and/or friends are generally sex workers themselves. They can also work in other employment but are linked to the network through intricate social relations from the city to the village. Some facilitators may actually believe they are helping the girls and their families to alleviate poverty (Le Bach 2002).

The literature cites that girls are often deceived by the job offer at the village level. Many times they were offered a legitimate job working in a restaurant or hotel only to find themselves forced into selling sex soon after arriving (Butcher 2003; Liao, et. al. 2003; ILO/IPEC 1998).

Le Bach (2002) points out that the child prostitutes interviewed reported that: "The families tended to trust the facilitators, who were from the same village, and let their daughters go. They did not realise how their children were destined to be employed." However, in the same paragraph Le Bach also reports, "Sometimes even their relatives, including parents, deceived or forced them". So while parents may be deceived themselves, it appears from the literature that some parents are aware of the potential risks of sex work for their daughters.

Adding to the deception and complexity of the daughters' plight is the misinformation given to the parents. According to Le Bach, young sex workers interviewed "had not informed their parents of their actual activity, telling them instead that they were working as domestic servants, tailors, hair stylists, waitresses at restaurants, etc.". It then appears that some parents may be deceiving their daughters and the daughters are misinforming their parents. Veiling the real situation on both sides further complicates an issue overwrought with complexities.



Literature regarding community perceptions and parent/child interactions enabling or preventing youth migration and sexual exploitation are limited and/or unavailable. It is essential that literature begins to address these issues more exhaustively.

### **3.8.1 Feminisation of Migration**

As in the rest of Asia, child migration in Viet Nam is not only confined to girls. Both boys and girls migrate to assist their families. However, it is the gendered dimensions of migration, such as demand for young women in the sex industry and perceived higher profit from daughters, which make them more vulnerable to exploitation.

The feminisation of migration has increased dramatically worldwide within the past ten years. It is estimated that nearly 50% of approximately 175 million migrants globally are women (Haour-Knipe and Grondin 2003). This trend of feminisation of migration has been occurring in Viet Nam as well. The new market economy is often blamed, but societal and communal values and variables also need to be taken into account.

The complexities of migration are many and varied. However, the experiences and risks of migration differ between women and men. Unskilled work and migration networks are often gender specific. In addition, there continues to be an increase in demand for unskilled female labour (Anderson and O'Connell 2003) in both the private sector (factories) and the sex industry. Moreover, the inequalities relating to the social and economic status of women ensure a steady supply of women for labour and sexual exploitation.

Young women often migrate due to an unfavourable environment at home, whether it is economic or some form of dysfunction (Rushing 2002; Le Bach 2002; Kelly and Le Bach 1999). Low education levels of both the parents and child, coupled with poverty, place the child in a more vulnerable situation.

In addition to using migration as a coping mechanism for the family, cultural traditions and filial piety compel young women to supplement and provide the family income through migration for employment (Anker 2000; Siddiqi and Patrinos 2002; Raymond et. al. 2002; Kelly and Le Bach 1999). The literature suggests that for young women, the decision to migrate is customarily a family survival strategy. However, literature also points to the use of child migration not for survival but for increased standard of living (Le Bach 2002).

In a World Bank study conducted in Asia and the Americas, it was found that numerous push and pull factors promote female migration. These factors, which are common to those found in Viet Nam, include: "Gender stereotyping of women in work situations which traditionally echo their role as caregivers and 'entertainers,' i.e., sexual objects; Growing poverty that push more women to migrate into the labour force; Growing family dependence on women for income; and the economic boom in larger cities" (Raymond et. al. 2002; Kelly and Le Bach 1999). It is these gendered dimensions of the push and pull factors that cause an increased number of young women to migrate (Archavanitkul 1998; Raymond et. al. 2002).

### **3.9 Conclusion**

The conceptual framework illustrates the various levels influencing and facilitating a young woman's migration and eventual sexual exploitation. The levels and their influences were broken down to portray how each level has distinct influences and how those interplay at the various levels.

The literature presented evidence that while poverty was most often cited as the reason for a young woman's migration and sexual exploitation, other factors at various levels within her society, community and family were more influential than poverty alone.

The migration of young girls from rural to urban areas creates a vulnerable environment ripe for exploitation. Girls are exposed to high-risk situations, such as violence and unprotected sex, in which they have limited control over their lives and well-being.

The literature revealed several areas of gaps in knowledge. The link between the migration processes and sexual exploitation of young women has been limited and has not been studied directly and soundly. There has been inadequate in-depth qualitative research conducted related to both migrant sex workers and rural families with respect to migration and sexual exploitation. The framework highlighted many dimensions to migration, which need to be considered in research on this issue. The following chapter describes how this framework was used to inform the study design and presents the methods.

## 4 STUDY METHODS

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### 4.1 Introduction: Natural History of the Study

This chapter describes the natural history of the study and the overall thesis study methods.

Originally, I was interested in investigating trafficking of women and girls for sex work within Viet Nam. I had been working with sex workers in HIV/AIDS prevention. I found that many of the young sex workers I worked with had migrated from rural areas to help support their families. This led to an interest in examining a broader aspect of the sex worker's lives – migration leading to sex work. The study consists of two complimentary components. The first is interviewing parents in rural areas with child migrants. This part of the study was commissioned by a child sponsorship<sup>4</sup> non-government organisation (NGO) that wanted to research 'child economic migration and trafficking' in rural areas in which they implement their programmes. While this part of the study was commissioned by an NGO, I was given substantial autonomy to conduct the research, with the organisation providing funding and assistance with obtaining government permission.

The second part of the study included interviewing migrant women in the city working in sex work. The study design for the interviews with the young women (now working as sex workers) was designed to complement key informant and household interviews.

I interviewed rural families with both young men and women migrants but here I report on interviews with families of young women migrants only. When youth migrate to the city, boys and girls usually end up in different occupations. Commonly boys do menial labour such as shining shoes while girls often work in factories or in the service

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<sup>4</sup> A child sponsorship NGO generates most of its income from people in industrialised countries donating money to a specific child in a developing country. In this case, the organisation receives approximately \$30 per month from the 'foster/donor family' for the child. The organisation sends pictures of the child to the donor and tries to create a bond. This organisation wanted to research child migration because when a child drops out of the program due to migration, payment for the child must also stop.

industry or may sell sex – either as their main occupation, or as an additional service. Young women were chosen as opposed to men for the focus of this study because young women are much more likely to be sexually exploited than men. Additionally, unskilled labour opportunities (e.g. factory work) pays a fraction of what can be earned in sex work, in this way young women are much more likely to be lured or tricked into sex work to earn an income.

## **4.2 Research Purpose, Aims and Objectives**

### **4.2.1 Research Purpose**

This study aims to better understand the process of young women's migration and entry into sex work. It investigates the facilitating factors, which enable young women to migrate to the city, and the factors that may inhibit them from migrating and at each stage to compare expectations with reality. This research is grounded on the basis that young women's exploitation through migration and sex work is not determined by one factor, but is influenced by a complex interaction of multiple (social) factors functioning at a national, communal, familial and individual level. The findings of the research are used to inform interventions that aim to reduce levels of sexual exploitation of young women in Viet Nam.

### **4.2.2 Objectives**

1. To explore and document the experience of young migrant women working in the sex industry about the process of migration and entry into sex work. This includes:
  - a) The process of decision-making for their migration
  - b) Young women's awareness of their situation prior to and during the migration process
  - c) Young women's understanding of work in the city
  - d) Steps that led to sexual exploitation and the circumstances of first sex with client
  - e) Perceptions of risk and risk-taking.
2. To identify potential household facilitating factors associated with young women's migration.

3. To gain an insight into the role that leaders, local police, community members, families and individuals may play in young women's migration and sexual exploitation.
4. To explore the implications of the findings for interventions to address young women's migration and sexual exploitation, including HIV/AIDS interventions.

### **4.3 Study Framework**

The framework (page 39) assisted in the guidance and development of the study methods. The model was used in the study design to conceptualise factors that could influence and facilitate a young woman's migration and sexual exploitation. It guided the study towards trying to gain an understanding of what the youth, parents, community and society perceived as influences associated with a child remaining in the village or migrating to the city and their eventual exploitation.

### **4.4 Overview of Study Design and Methods**

This research was conducted between March 2002 to September 2003. It consisted of four complementary components: in-depth interviews with key informants, focus group discussions with community members, in-depth interviews with household members from villages known to be sources of migration, in-depth interviews with household members with no known migration, and in-depth interviews with young women working as sex workers in Hai Phong province. This design enabled comparisons between parents perceptions and young women's perceptions, between key informants and families, and between sending and non-sending households and villages in order to gain insight into the issue as whole. The methods used for each of these are described in turn below.

As the main aim of this study was to explore the perceptions and underpinnings of migration and exploitation and through this gain a more profound understanding of young migrant sex workers and their families, qualitative methods were used. While a quantitative design is valuable, it is not adequate for understanding community's and individual's heightened perceptions of their situation and needs (Vohra 2003). According to Miles and Huberman (1994):

*Qualitative data is conducted through an intense and/or prolonged contact with a 'field' or life situation. The researcher's role is to gain a 'holistic' (systematic, encompassing, integrated) overview of the context under study. The researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors 'from the inside,' through the process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding and of suspending preconceptions. Finally, the researcher may isolate certain themes from these data and explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their lives.*

A case study approach was used in that a selected group of individuals to be interviewed to gain insight into what may be happening in a more complex social situation (Moore 2000; Yin 1994). According to Yin (1994), the unique strength in using a case study design is that it enables the researcher to deal with an array of evidence including documents, interviews and observations. Although this design may limit the study in that it is not a large-scale survey, it thoroughly examines the situation in a lesser number however, provides greater depth and understanding (Moore 2000). Within the case study a purposive sampling was used as it permitted the choice of a case (migrant sex workers and families with migrant children) and setting in which the process being studied took place (Silverman 2001).

The study took place in two sites, rural households and urban 'red light' districts. Separate guidelines for interviews were developed for the 3 groups included in the study: households in rural areas, young women in the city (working as sex workers) and key informants. The guidelines were designed to be complementary, with each exploring issues of decision-making, influences leading to migration and the migrant girls' life in the city. Different translators and sampling were used for the two interview sites.

The following sections describe the methods used for each of the three groups included in the study. Separate sections describe: 1) the sampling strategy, including size and justification for the three samples, the sampling frame and the selection of sample; 2) data collection, the design of instruments, and methods of collecting data; and 3) methods of data entry and analysis.

## **4.5 Methodology**

### **4.5.1 Sampling Strategy**

#### **Size and Justification for Different Samples**

For the thesis the following interviews were conducted:

- In-depth interviews with 20 young migrant women now working as sex workers in Do Son Township and Hai Phong City.
- In-depth interviews with 23 rural households known to have a female child migrant, and 4 households with no migration, in villages without migration.
- Four focus group discussions with rural community members.
- Key informant interviews with (18) local leaders, provincial leaders and (4) non-government organisations working with child economic migration, trafficking and sex workers.

The methods used for each are described below.

#### **Selection of Sample, Criteria for Methods Used**

##### **4.5.1.1.1 *Rural Households***

The research with rural households was conducted in collaboration with an international non-government organisation working in Viet Nam. As mentioned earlier, the NGO is a child-sponsorship organisation that has worked closely with these families in rural communities since 1995. The NGO obtained government permission to work in the rural areas. The NGO with which the family interviews took place requested to remain anonymous due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

Three rural provinces (Nam Ha, Phu Tho and Quang Tri) were selected for interviewing households and key informants because they were NGO project areas and were known for child migration, in part due to their location close to larger industrial cities. Nam Ha, Phu Toc and Quang Tri Provinces were chosen and then 2-4 communes selected within each province. The communes were selected from the NGO project areas and had documented statistics on increased migration in these areas. The sending and 2 non-sending communes were selected, and then villages within the

communes and finally households were identified for interviews by a community health educator working with the NGO. (Names of villages will not be used in this report so that participants may not be identified.) A list of communes and provinces can be found in Appendix O. For this study a household was defined as a place where a caretaker/s of a child (migrated or not) live or have lived together. Households were selected through NGO documentation (as all households had a sponsor child).

In-depth interviews were conducted with 23 purposely selected rural households known to have a female child and/or children working in a city to help support the family. In addition, interviews took place with 4 households with no known child migration in separate villages from those with migration.

Household level interviews were an extremely important tool for this study as the primary researcher was unable to locate any literature based on household interviews with families known to have child migrants. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) recommends interviewing families of young sex workers, yet in a recent study (Le Bach 2002), the ILO researcher found it impossible to do this. For this reason, the focus of the household interviews was not to identify households explicitly linked to known sex workers, but instead to focus on interviews with households known to have a migrant daughter working in the city.

The criteria for this study included families with known migration living in the NGO project area and families with no known migration living in the NGO project area. A caretaker from the household was interviewed about the family situation and the migration process of their child.

A small selection of non-sending families was interviewed to determine if they were positive-deviant families or if there were other reasons for not sending. These families were from non-sending communes and were not included in the original study design but were added to the study while in the rural areas to ascertain if there were protective reasons for not sending a child.

#### **4.5.1.1.2 Sex Worker Interviews**

This component of the research was conducted with assistance from and in collaboration with the partner organisation, DKT International in Hanoi, Viet Nam. DKT is a condom social marketing NGO that works closely with sex worker populations



throughout Viet Nam. DKT has been working with sex workers in Do Son and Thien Loi for several years and has a good working relationship with the girls and with government officials in this area. DKT assisted in obtaining government permission to work in this area.

Sex workers were interviewed in two sites in Hai Phong Province, northern Viet Nam. Hai Phong Province is near the boarder of China, and is a well known tourist destination for both Vietnamese and Chinese tourists. Young women commonly migrate to Hai Phong from many different provinces throughout Viet Nam. The first interview site was Do Son Township, located within Hai Phong Province and famous both for the casino (which is forbidden to Vietnamese nationals) and because of hundreds of hotels and karaoke bars which offer the services of young female sex workers. This study site was chosen due to the known high concentration of young migrant sex workers working here.

Each of the hotels in Do Son commonly employ between 4-10 girls, depending on the size of the establishment. The young women working at the hotels are generally between the ages of 14-24 years. The young women migrate from surrounding poorer provinces in order to find work in the resort town. As many young women migrants arrive in Do Son searching for seasonal work, they are often lured or tricked into the sex trade.

The second site where sex workers were interviewed was in Thien Loi Street, Hai Phong City. This is another popular receiving site for young migrant women exploited into sex work. Young women who now work in Thien Loi street have often moved from Do Son hotels due to their 'advanced' age.

In both sites, the areas were mapped with the aid of the provincial key informants and assistants. Do Son Township is made up of three zones. Being a peninsula, zones 1 and 3 are located on the entrance into and exit out of the town, while zone 2 is located in the centre of town. Zone 2 is the favoured area for sex work because of its location to the beach front and the 'nicer' hotels. Therefore, the young women in this area are more highly sought after as the hotels have a reputation for offering younger and prettier girls. Young migrant sex workers were interviewed from zones 1 and 2 (zones 2 and 3 are similar therefore a sample was taken only from one of these zones).

In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 female migrants, purposefully (within criteria) selected and currently working as indirect sex workers in Hai Phong Province. Ten young women were interviewed from karaoke bars and hotels in Thien Loi Street (Hai Phong City) and ten young women from Do Son Township.

The original criteria for this study included age (the female migrant must be between the age of 14-22 years as per WHO and UN definition of young people) and migration status (from a rural area). However, during the pilot testing it was found that 'older girls' (up to age 27) were more able to talk and to openly reflect on experiences as migrant sex workers which could assist with a deeper understanding of the situation.

During the interview process the researcher found that the self-reported age of the young women did not necessarily coincide with the observed age, this concurred with the translator's opinion. Therefore the ages of the young women could not be determined with accuracy due to ethical, legal and social concerns, for this reason an observed age was noted with the reported age. The ages and commune of each participant can be found in Table 1 below. The majority of the young women reported being in their late-teens to mid-twenties.

**Table 1: Demographic data of sex workers interviewed**

<b>Sex-worker Participant Pseudonym</b>	<b>Current reported age (observed age in brackets)</b>	<b>Reported age when left home</b>	<b>Home province</b>
Thuy	22 yrs (18)	19 yrs	Thanh Hoa
Hoa	23 (19)	20	Dinh Binh
Phuong	23 (18)	21	Hai Duong
Mai	22 (18)	21	Thanh Hoa
Bich	22 (17)	21	Hai Duong
Thuan	19 (16)	18	Hai Duong
Duong	24 (18)	23	Phu Toc
Thi	23 (20)	23 (in city 10 days)	Pho Toc
Thanh	23	23 (in city 2 months)	Hai Duong
Nga	18 (16)	18 (in city 1 week)	Hai Duong
Thu	22	18	Nam Dinh
Hoang (IDU)	27	25	Rural Hai Phong
Kim	23 (19)	23 (in city 4 mos.)	Rural Hai Phong
Lien	19 (17)	19	Hung Yen
Tien (IDU partner)	22	20	Rural Hai Phong
Anh (IDU)	25	21	Rural Hai Phong
Bian	25	19	Thai Binh
Hien	21	20	Rural Hai Phong
Dao	20	19	Thanh Hoa
Kieu	19 (17)	18	Phu Toc

The research conducted with rural families interviewed those with child migrants under the age of 16 years, while the interviews with sex workers did not exclude young women under the age of 16 years, no girls reported being less than 18 years. In addition, as the legal age of consent in Viet Nam is 18 years, this may have led to an over-reporting of age by the respondents. However, the author does recognise that

there exists very different policy and theoretical concerns related to child sex work and young women over the age of 16 years in sex work.

**4.5.1.1.3    Key Informants**

The key informants were selected for this study because they work closely with the rural communities. The key informants included commune leaders and vice-leaders, police, community health workers and members of the Committee for Population, Families and Children (CPFC) (please see Table 2 for summary of key informant interviews). The CPFC was meant to work closely with families to ensure the protection and welfare of children. Key informants were selected after each commune had been identified. The approval process for the study also took place through the Provincial, District and Community leaders. Key informants were identified and interviewed in both sending and non-sending communities.

**Table 2: Key Informant Information**

Categories of key Informants	Description	Number
<i>Commune Leaders and Vice Leaders and leaders of the community</i>	The Commune Leader and Vice-leader act as head of the local commune. This is the point at which most laws are regulated.	10
<i>Committee for Population Families and Children</i>	The CPFC works with families and children in order to ensure their well-being and promote family planning	3 (one representative per province)
<i>Commune and District Police</i>	The Commune and District Police work to protect nationals at the local level and enforce laws.	3 (one per province)
<i>Provincial AIDS Committee</i>	A government body working towards prevention of HIV/AIDS among sex worker and drug use populations.	2
<i>Non-Government Organization Members</i>	Organizations working with families and sex workers in the study area.	4

In-depth interviews were conducted with (16) key informants in rural areas, with (2) Provincial AIDS committee members in Hai Phong and (4) members of non-government organisations working with sex workers. Additionally, four focus groups were conducted with key informants from rural community members.

This part of the research was conducted with assistance from the non-government organisations working in both the rural and urban study sites.

The criteria for key informants encompassed leaders in the communities (both rural and urban), community members working closely with the rural households or sex workers, and officials/staff working with the study population.

Selection of the key informants was conducted with the assistance of the NGOs working in these areas. The rural areas were generally a full days drive from Hanoi, as a result, the researcher relied on the NGO assistants in rural areas to schedule appointments with the commune leaders and other key-informants well in advance. The permission to conduct interviews with key informants was also obtained through the NGOs. Once permission had been granted by the leaders to conduct interviews with the key informants, they then gave permission to conduct interviews with families and sex workers.

It was found during the pilot testing that once approval and advocacy meetings had taken place with authorities, the researcher and assistants were able to conduct interviews at the study sites.

## **Frame**

Households were selectively sampled from the provinces which were in NGO programme areas. Households with known migration and a small sample of households with no known migration were included. Key informants were also selectively sampled from the provinces and study sites to assist with the understanding of their role as gatekeepers and knowledge of the community and its members. Lastly, a purposive sample of young migrant women working as sex workers in two urban areas were selected for this study.

## **Design and Translation of Instruments**

The interview guidelines were developed by the primary researcher, through the use of past interview experience, existing literature, consultation with Le Bach Duong of the International Labour Organisation and more importantly, based on the study's conceptual framework.

### **4.5.1.1.4 Rural Household Interviews**

The themes of the household interviews included: perceptions of poverty, indebtedness, opportunities for work in village, migration and perceptions of migration,

decision-making process for migration in the family and risk to child in the city (please see Appendix I for interview guidelines). The interview guidelines for non-sending families were very similar to those of sending families however they focused on the decision-making process for not sending a child.

Miss Thuan, the research assistant/interpreter, translated the interview guidelines into Vietnamese, it was checked by another person, and then translated back into English to clarify and confirm meanings and finally back into Vietnamese. Care was taken to ensure that questions were phrased in a non-judgemental, positive and supportive manner.

For the purpose of the interviews with family members, a child was considered a person 16 years or under as per Vietnamese Law. The household interview began collecting basic demographic data such as number of children in the family, members of family living in the household, amount of rice taken in per year (wealth indicator), and sponsorship status of the child. The interview guideline then focused on various themes. The themes centred around: the decision to send a child to the city; who was responsible for the decision, why was it made; perceptions of child's life and work in the city, expectations of monetary remittances from the child and when they expect the child will return. The interview ended on a positive note, thanking the household for their time.

The interviews with non-sending families focused on why the decision for not sending a child was made, had the parents/father ever thought about sending the child and what were the barriers to sending a child and/or protective factors for sending a child. The interviews also ended on a positive note.

#### **4.5.1.1.5 Sex Worker Interviews**

The themes for the interview guidelines with young migrant sex workers were developed according to themes that emerged from the family interviews and the ecological model and the framework of push and pull factors. In addition, the interview guidelines reflected gaps in information missing from the household level interviews, such as the daughter's perspective of her situation.

The interview guidelines for female migrant interviews were developed in English, translated into Vietnamese, checked by a third person and translated back into English to ascertain if the correct meanings of the questions had been translated into Vietnamese properly and focused on the objectives. Any problems identified were then corrected. As the interpreters were Vietnamese and experienced in interview techniques, this was of great assistance in relating to issues of cultural appropriateness for the interview design and the study in its entirety.

While this study with sex workers was conducted independently from the research with families, it builds upon and complements the themes and data collected from the rural household interviews. The study with the migrant sex workers was designed so that the data could be used to triangulate, compare and validate data from the households in rural areas with children who had migrated to the city with data from the girls currently working in the city as sex workers.

The interviews were designed so that a rapport and trust had been developed with the participant before sensitive questions were asked. The questions posed during the interview and the dialogue surrounding the probes for discussion were in a supportive and understanding environment in which the participant did not feel threatened or judged. Participants were informed that they could stop the interview at any time or refuse to take part in the interview. Given the sensitive nature of the study and the need for cultural and personal appropriateness and sensitivity of questions, care was taken to ensure that the language of the interview was appropriate.

The interviews with the sex workers began with an open ended question, 'can you tell us why you left home?'. Probes were then used to discuss topics that centred around her perceptions which included: the experience of the female migrant, steps in the migration process, decision-making processes that led to her migration, life as a migrant, work in the sex trade industry, what led to work in the hotels/bars, what are perceived and real risks of migration and sex work, her expectations for herself and her future (please see interview guidelines in Appendix B). The interview was designed to conclude on a positive note by discussing the participant's strengths and highlighted her coping strategies (Zimmerman and Watts 2003).

#### **4.5.1.1.6    *Key Informant Interviews***

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants in rural areas of the study, in Hai Phong Province (Provincial AIDS Committee) and with members of non-government organisations working with the sex workers.

The interview guidelines for the key informants were similar to those developed for the rural households and sex workers. They were translated by a Vietnamese research assistant. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese with the assistance of an interpreter. The interviews took approximately one hour and were recorded manually. Commonly, several key informants attended an interview (see limitations for explanation).

The key informant interviews were structured to explore the community and national/society levels of the ecological model. Themes explored the extent community members (as gatekeepers of the society) understood about the situation in their commune or village. Basic demographic data on total population, population of youth in the commune, known numbers of child/youth migrants was first collected. Themes then explored awareness of laws related to migration and exploitation, understanding of the situation of the family and of the female child migrant once in the city. The interview guideline (see Appendix G and H for interview guidelines) was developed both according to themes that the NGO was interested in, and that related to the specific research hypothesis.

The individual key informant interviews followed an interview guideline and an open exchange and flow of information was sought by the researcher. The interviews in Hai Phong City were conducted in a private office at the Provincial AIDS Committee (PAC) building. The interviews each took approximately one hour. The main themes, guided by the framework, discussed the PACs understanding and awareness of the processes that led to the female sex workers' migration to Hai Phong, her family situation, her situation as a sex worker, her risks and to what extent the government and the PAC works with the young women. In addition, demographic data such as number of sex workers and sex venues in Hai Phong Province, number of migrants, number of HIV/STI cases, and health services available to the sex workers was collected from the PAC key informants.



## **4.5.2 Data Collection**

### **4.5.2.1.1 *Rural Household***

The family interviews were designed to be culturally appropriate and developed in a way to allow the interviews to flow naturally. Although the interview guideline was the same for each household, the researcher used it more as a topic guideline for facilitating a conversation with the households. In this way, each household could speak about what was important to them, rather than having to follow a prescribed script. The researcher and assistant/translator were aware of the need to remain sensitive and non-judgmental. The length and time of all interviews took into consideration the participants needs, especially emotional needs and time constraints. The interviews took approximately 60 – 90 minutes. The data was recorded manually by the researcher after being translated by the interpreter. Generally, the household members, a community health worker, the researcher and assistant were present during the interviews. A community representative guided and introduced the researcher and the assistant to the families.

Field visits were also utilised to observe the family home environment thus enabling the researcher to witness attitudes, behaviours and household situations that may be better understood in a natural setting.

The government process of permitting access to rural areas took several months. The government highly discouraged access to rural areas for pilot-testing of the study. As a result, the first province visited (not included in this research study) was used as the pilot-test and adjustments were made to the guideline after this province.

An experienced female translator/research assistant, Miss Le Thi Phuong Thuan was hired by the NGO for this study. Although the primary researcher had not worked with Miss Thuan previously, she was an invaluable asset to the research and has since become project manager for Oxfam Quebec's trafficking project.

Miss Thuan and the primary researcher extensively reviewed the interview guidelines prior to conducting the interviews in order to carry a conversation with households rather than ticking off questions. She kept a copy of the interview guidelines in both English and Vietnamese. At the primary researcher's request, she did not read from the interview guideline and acted only as a translator for the interviews so that the primary researcher could control the flow and direction of the conversation.

#### **4.5.2.1.2 Sex Worker Interviews**

An experienced (male) Vietnamese translator, Mr. Bui Trang Thu, and an assistant, Ms. Dinh Thi Hong were recruited for this component of the study. Ms. Dinh Thi Hong and Bui Trang Thu have worked with the female migrants for several years as programme assistants for NGOs and have developed a trusting relationship with the young women and the hotel owners. The primary investigator and translator worked together in the past for an NGO, evaluating HIV/AIDS prevention projects. Within this evaluation, interviews took place with injection drug users, sex workers and key informants. In this way, an effective working relationship developed. In addition, the primary investigator had previously worked with both a female interpreter and a male interpreter (the same person used for the final data collection). It was through this experience that the researcher learnt that information was given much more freely with the male interpreter whom the young women knew (as he works with an NGO) and possibly felt more comfortable with. Wellings et. al. (1990), points out that while female interviewers may elicit better response rates, a non-judgmental approach is more effective and valuable than the interviewers' age or gender.

The primary investigator conducted the interviews with the assistance of the interpreter and the assistant. The interviews were conducted in English and translated into Vietnamese. Although this was more time consuming, it allowed the primary investigator to direct questions and focus the interview process.

The translator understood the importance of phrasing questions in a non-judgemental, positive and supportive manner. In addition, the translator was asked not to lead or phrase questions differently or give responses other than what was said by the primary researcher. These characteristics were essential in obtaining the data for this study. Much like the interview guideline for the rural households, the translator was asked to become familiar with the interview guideline but to not read directly from it during the interviews. This assisted in the flow of conversation and the ability for the primary researcher to direct the questions.

The interviews were piloted in surrounding areas of Do Son Township to assess appropriateness of questions. Changes were then made to the interview guidelines before commencing research in the field. The changes included omission, addition and re-placement of questions. For example, originally the question related to 'hopes for the future' was intended to be a positive ending to the interview. However, during the

interview the girls often became emotional due to the expressed futility of hoping for a brighter future. In this way, this question was moved to the section with more sensitive questions. It was also found during this process that the young women had to be accessed during a small window period of the day when they were not expecting clients. For this reason, interviews were scheduled to match the needs of the sex workers and the approved timing of the government officials. It was intended that the interviews were tape-recorded. However, during the pilot testing, the young women became visibly upset and often refused the use of a recorder, as it was often mistaken for a camera. Due to the discomfort and suspicion, the interviews were documented in note form only.

### **4.5.3 Data Collection**

#### **4.5.3.1.1 *Rural Households***

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to gain firsthand information and insight from families with migrant children.

Families were approached at their houses, informed of the study, and asked if they would like to participate. They were informed of the confidentiality and assured their house numbers and names would not be recorded. Tape-recorders were not used for the interviews due to distrust and suspicion. The researcher and assistant took care to review interviews on a daily basis to ensure validity and clarity of responses.

Interviews with rural households with known child migrants and a small sample of households with no child migration were an essential element for filling the gaps in literature. This was the first time records had been kept by an organisation in which data was available for specific children migrating from a particular village and household (see Appendix K for documentation). The families and children were known to the NGO and to the community workers hired by the NGO. Therefore, a purposive sample of households was chosen for the study.

#### **4.5.3.1.2 Sex Worker Interviews**

The migrant participants were approached at the hotel in which they worked. The hotel owner was asked for permission to talk with the young women prior to requesting permission from the sex worker to be interviewed. The hotel owner was told that the study was related to female migration and that the hotel name and address would not be recorded on any documents.

The young women were identified at the hotel by Ms. Dinh Thi Hong (the DKT assistant). They commonly sit in the front lobby of the hotel or bar to wait for clients and were approached by the researcher here. A maximum of two young women per hotel were interviewed in order not to create interview bias if they spoke to each other about the questions.

When permission had been granted by the hotel/bar owner, in a private area, the participant was fully informed about the nature, content and purpose of the study, including sensitive subject matters encompassing any risks and benefits of participating. She was asked if she had any further questions about the interview and was then asked if she agreed to participate in the interview. Verbal consent to participate in the study was administered and witnessed by the translator. If she consented to participate, a location for the interview was agreed upon. The interviewers requested the use of a private room in the hotel or selected a different location if it was more private or comfortable for the participant. In a private room or private setting, the primary researcher and translator used the interview guideline to carry out the interview process. The interviews took approximately one hour and took into consideration the time constraints (sex workers could leave the interview to meet a client and return when they were finished) and time away from clients. This is discussed further in the limitations section of this chapter.

Names of the female migrant sex workers were not requested by the researcher and were not noted on any documents. Each consent form and interview were marked with a coded study number to assure confidentiality. Additionally, care was (and will be) taken in dissemination of data findings that the female migrant participants are not identified in any way.

Among the 20 sex workers interviewed, 2 of the young women stopped the interview and did not continue. One of the women had attended high school with the interpreter

and was clearly uncomfortable. The interpreter was sensitive to her needs, made polite conversation (not related to the topic) and thanked her for talking with us. The second young woman stopped the interview when sensitive questions arose, she was asked if she would like a coca-cola and to talk about something else, she stated that she did not feel comfortable and wanted to leave. The researcher and assistant assured her this was not a problem and thanked her for her time.

One sex worker also stopped the interview to take a break and returned when she was ready. A few others stopped the interview to see a client and returned after 10-20 minutes.

#### **4.5.3.1.3    *Key Informant Interviews***

The interviews with government representatives were conducted before any other data collection (i.e. interviews with households, key informants and sex workers), as approval of government leaders must proceed any activity. Government approval was requested and permitted through DKT International. Formal government approval was necessary before visiting any province.

Key informant interviews took place with 18 local and provincial leaders including four focus groups with community members and 4 key informant interviews with organisations.

The cooperation of commune leaders was paramount in accessing commune level households. If the commune leaders were not open to the interviews with the community representatives or the families, commonly they reported that child migration did not occur (although documents contradicted this), or said that family interviews were not possible because the parents may not be home. Building the trust of the commune officials often took many hours. Due to the sensitive nature of child migration and sex work, the data collection relied heavily on the cooperation of each commune leader.

The interviews with rural key informants were conducted in the official commune office. Meetings were scheduled with the commune officials in advance (generally one month prior to the visit) so that permission could be obtained for the interviews.

Commune representatives were interviewed in the rural areas included in this study. The representatives generally included the commune leader and a member of the

Committee for Protection of Children and Families. The interviews took approximately 60 – 90 minutes. Privacy was maintained for the interviews with commune leaders.

The focus group discussions took place in a larger room in the commune building. There were a total of 4 focus groups. The focus groups included community members such as members of the Women's Union, community volunteers, school teachers and the Youth Union. Focus group discussions took approximately 90 minutes. In this case, many more people attended the focus group than invited and it was culturally inappropriate to ask them to leave. This is discussed in the limitations section of this chapter. Data from the focus groups was not included because they did not generate discussion, instead they were dominated by one person, therefore the information from these groups has been cited as key informant data.

Key informant interviews were also conducted with two Provincial AIDS Committee members in Hai Phong Province. I had worked with and attended a 2 week training with the provincial authorities in this area on previous assignments, and so already had a good rapport with the government authorities and the NGOs that work with young women migrants.

The key informant interviews with organisations working with the sex workers in Hai Phong province took place at their offices in Hanoi. The interviews took approximately 30 – 45 minutes. The themes were similar to those of the PAC, however questions also focused on NGO interventions with the sex workers.

#### **4.5.4 Data Analysis**

##### **Data Entry**

All data was recorded manually by the primary researcher. The interpreter would translate the questions from English into Vietnamese, then back to English, at this time the primary researcher recorded the data in a notebook.

##### **Methods of Analysis**

The data from all interviews and observations were transcribed into note form by the primary researcher while in the field and later into the computer. Preliminary analysis of data took place before entering data into a computer programme. In this way, key

findings could be disseminated more rapidly to the groups involved. The data were stored in a locked facility and accessible only to the principal investigator. The data were destroyed once transcribed.

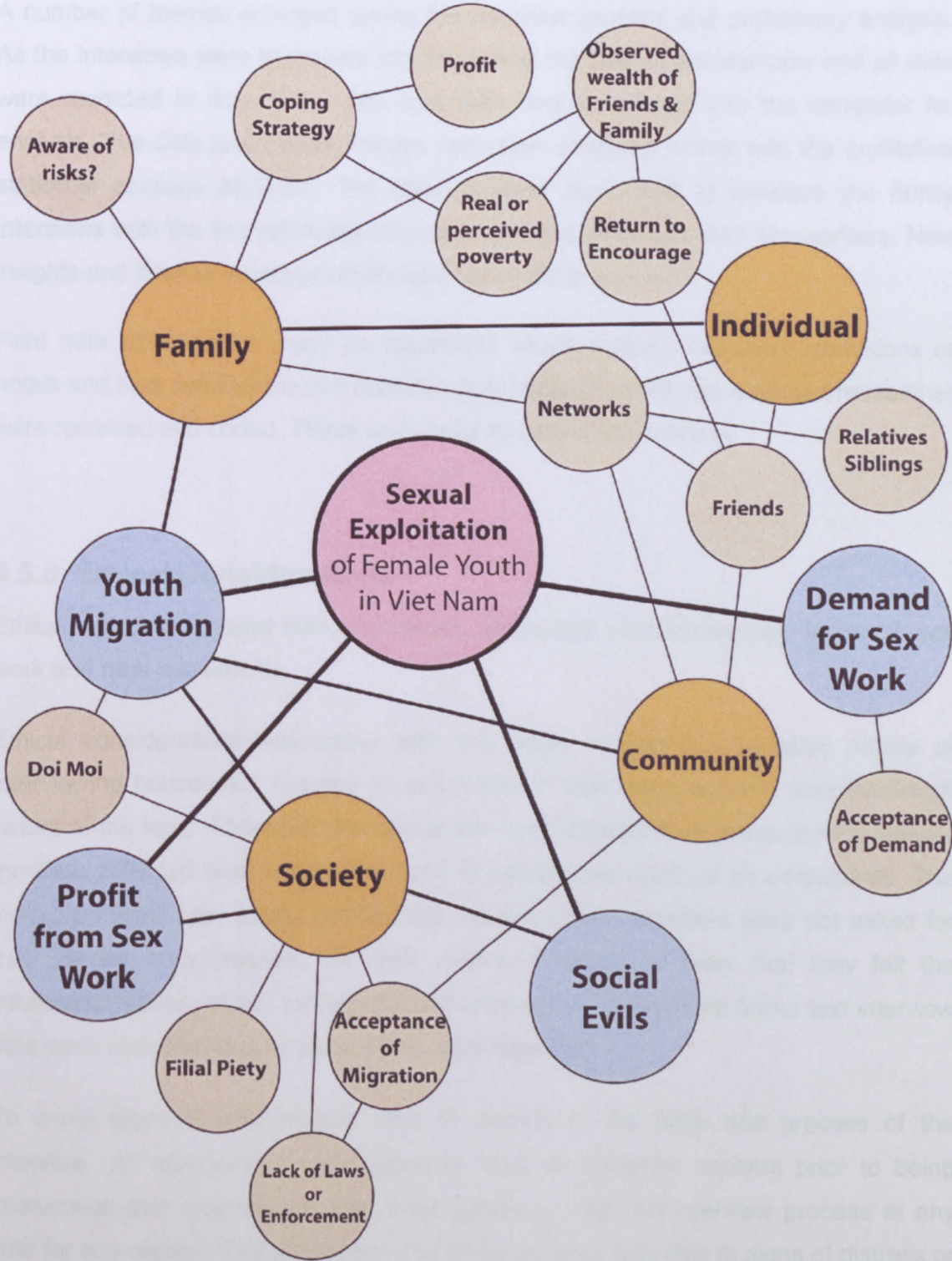
The data analysis process for this research was a combination of pre-existing themes and grounded theory in which the thematic categories emerged from the data analysis (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

Themes from the conceptual framework were built into the study design. Themes also began to emerge during the interview process. The original themes included young women's rural to urban migration, sexual exploitation and the roles of family, community, society and individual (these can be seen as the orange circles in fig. 3). During the process of analysis other themes began to emerge, including coping strategies, profit, networks, acceptance and demand for migration and sex work (these can be seen in the tan circles in fig. 3). The themes were then analysed further to understand how they were all inter-related (shown by the lines connecting the circles in fig. 3).

These themes were then built upon once all data had been collected and transcribed. The interview data was entered into NUDIST qualitative software package for further systematic analysis. NUDIST assisted the manual process of defining categories and themes for data coding and analysis. Key constructs, patterns, themes, contrasts and variations were examined to categorise the data (Silverman, 2003). (See Appendix P for example of coding of themes for sex worker interviews.) These were then compared from the three different groups interviewed, the female migrant sex workers, the families and the key informants. This comparison allowed insight into the perceptions of each group and the meshing of those perceptions to gain a better understanding of the issue as a whole (see Figure 3 on following page).

**Figure 3: Mapping of Themes and Process Analysis**

# Mapping of Themes and Process of Analysis





#### **4.5.5 Process Followed**

##### **Rural Households, Sex Workers and Key Informants**

A number of themes emerged during the interview process and preliminary analysis. As the interviews were translated into English at the time of the interview and all data were recorded in note form, data was then directly entered into the computer for analysis. The data and overall themes were then analysed further with the qualitative statistical package NUDIST. The findings were then used to compare the family interviews with the key informant interviews and the interviews with sex workers. New insights and themes emerged which were then further analysed.

Field note observations (such as household wealth ranking indicators, conditions of hotels and bars used by the sex workers) and discussions with the assistant researcher were recorded and coded. These were used as part of the analysis.

#### **4.5.6 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical concerns focused mainly on issues associated with interviewing women in sex work and rural households.

Ethical considerations associated with this study include the sensitive nature of interviewing households (viewed as suspicious in Viet Nam) and the sensitive/illegal nature of the topic. Therefore, the researcher and assistant took precautions to ensure the data collected was anonymous, and to respect the rights of all participants. The interviews were kept strictly confidential, the household members were not asked for their names or addresses, nor their children's names in order that they felt the information would remain confidential and anonymous. All consent forms and interview data were coded so that no participants were identified.

To avoid distress, interviewees were in control of the pace and process of the interview. All respondents were given or read an informed consent prior to being interviewed that emphasized they could pause or stop the interview process at any time for any reason. The researcher and assistant were sensitive to signs of distress or anxiety that may have arisen and continuously asked the respondents if they preferred to stop the interview if they did not feel comfortable. No remuneration was given to the households or key informants.

As in the household level interviews, there are a number of ethical considerations associated with conducting interviews with young women in sex work. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, both for the young women and the government, extreme precautions were taken in dealing with the privacy, rights and security of the girls. Above all were the safety, confidentiality and respect of the young women who participated in the study. The primary investigator and the assistant aimed to ensure the safety and well-being of the study participants. The young women were not asked for their name, their family's names or village names in order that they felt the information would remain confidential. In addition, the names of the brothels and addresses were not recorded. All consent forms and interview data were coded so that no sex worker participants were identified. Health and social services were identified, via an address and contact organisation for services, for those young women who requested assistance.

To minimise distress, interviewees were in control of the pace and process of the interview. All respondents were given or read an informed consent prior to being interviewed that emphasised they could pause or stop the interview process at any time for any reason. The researcher and assistant were sensitive to signs of distress or anxiety that may have arisen and continuously asked the respondent if she preferred to stop the interview if she did not feel comfortable.

Some of the interview questions were inherently difficult due to the nature of the circumstances and may have caused a certain amount of discomfort. Questions about traumatic sexual experiences were managed with sensitivity and concern. The young women may have felt ashamed or uncomfortable discussing their present occupation and related issues. In addition, questions pertaining to the sex workers family (both past and present) may also have been upsetting as they recalled memories of their family life, loneliness and missing family. On the other hand, since sex work is illegal and sex workers are seemingly invisible, the participants may have benefited from talking to someone about their life and their difficulties, this may have also been therapeutic for some participants.

Sex work is stigmatising work, therefore some participants may, despite efforts made to the contrary by the interviewer and interpreter, have felt judged. Throughout the interview, the researcher and interpreter took special care to reassure the participant she was not being judged, that information about her experiences was valued and may

help others. The interviewer aimed to assure the participant she was not being judged by phrasing the questions in ways that did not impugn judgement, offering referral information, assuring her of the importance of her experience and ending each interview in a positive and supportive manner. No remuneration was given to the participants.

## **4.6 Dissemination for Rural and Urban Data**

Dissemination of the preliminary findings took place through meetings and written reports. Meetings were conducted at the provincial level. In addition, findings will be presented through in-country reports and internationally peer reviewed journals. The data will be disseminated in-country so that the results from this study may be used to make recommendations for the development of interventions to address the migration and sexual exploitation of young women. Presently, the researcher has submitted one article for publication on this study and one article on sex work and social evils in Viet Nam has been accepted for publication.

## **4.7 Study Rigour**

In order to ensure that the research methods were both reliable and valid, the measures taken are discussed below.

### **Reliability**

Reliability refers to the extent to which different researchers using similar methods or the same researcher on a different occasion would find consistent data (Seale, 1999, Yin, 1994, Miles and Huberman, 1994, Silverman, 2001). To try to ensure the reliability of this study, the researcher used a semi-structured in-depth interview guideline for each of the three groups interviewed, so that each touched on common themes and questions throughout. As her main employment, the researcher had been interviewing sex workers on HIV/AIDS prevention throughout Viet Nam for more than 9 months. It was during this time the researcher found reliability through data saturation of comparable accounts from the sex workers. In addition, pilot testing with the interview

tools was conducted to ensure the appropriateness of the questions and the clarity after translated (Silverman, 1993).

The data collection was also carried out in the same way for each interview for each group. The strict nature of the government approval process and the collection of information in Viet Nam also lent to increased reliability as very little flexibility in scheduling was allowed after permission was given by government authorities.

## **Validity**

Validity is the degree to which what is reported accurately represents the social phenomena it purports to represent, in essence, the truth (Silverman, 2001). Verifying validity is challenging because truth is subjective. Triangulation was used to increase the validity of this study.

The data was triangulated with existing literature of migration and sexual exploitation. It was also discussed with key informants researching and working with young sex workers in this area. For example, after 4 of the interviews had been conducted with the sex workers, the researcher met with a project director of an NGO who had been working with the young women for several years. The data from the sex workers was discussed with the key informant to get their opinion on if they felt the data was consistent with the information they receive from the young women. The key informant verified the information as being realistic and consistent with their information. After all interviews were conducted, a second meeting took place with the NGO worker and a meeting with the Provincial AIDS Committee director to discuss the validity of the data.

Data was triangulated from parents and key informants to check consistency of general responses and emerging themes. Similar to the triangulation of data with the sex workers, the data from parents and key informants was discussed with NGO workers. The researcher felt that discussing the parents' data with local officials was unethical as it may compromise the confidentiality of the families' responses.

Validity was also improved by selecting a variety of key informants with different levels of authority and knowledge of their community.

The experience of interviewing family members assisted in forming and guiding questions with the sex workers, and comparing and validating responses. Last, observations in the field (for both rural and urban settings, such as wealth ranking

indicators), coupled with the interviews, afforded the opportunity to assess the data collected.

## **4.8 Limitations**

While every effort was taken to overcome the limitations, there are some limitations inherent to the internal and external workings of this study.

There are many limitations associated with conducting research in Viet Nam. The strict government regulations together with an extremely sensitive topic, which the government does not always acknowledge, created many obstacles and influenced the validity and reliability of this study. For example, at the national and provincial level, increased suspicion was placed on the study, since both migration and sexual exploitation are not often acknowledged. The idea of an outsider talking with people in rural villages and brothel areas (which are not recognised as existing) about sensitive issues was seen as a concern. In rural areas, commune leaders, police and authorities often accompanied the researcher and assistant to household interviews. This undoubtedly led to respondent bias. However, even in this environment, families shared information with the researcher possibly due to the normative nature of child migration. The way in which questions were phrased and the positive attitude towards migration resulted in useful responses at the rural level.

Prior to receiving permission for visiting rural areas, the researcher had to submit an outline of the study and the study tools. In this way the validity of the study could have been compromised as the government could inform the local populations of the study before the interviews were conducted.

Conducting focus groups and individual key informant interviews in the rural areas were a constant challenge which undoubtedly affected the validity and reliability of the study. A total of five to eight people (from various groups) were invited to attend focus groups. Unfortunately, most groups turned out to be twenty people on average. It was culturally unacceptable to ask uninvited members to leave. In addition, due to the hierarchal system in Viet Nam, the person with the most authority was the only one 'allowed' to speak. Similarly, with individual key informant interviews, only one individual was requested to attend the interview. However, this was viewed as suspicious and was also not acceptable; quite often 2-3 authorities attended an

'individual' interview. Individual key informant interviews and individual interviews with sex workers were possible at the urban level.

A number of time limitations created an additional challenge to this study. The time constraints included the formal government approval process which at times took months for select provinces. After a formal letter from the collaborating NGO had been submitted to the provincial authorities, dates would be set by the authorities and a strict timeline and schedule were given to be followed. If all interviews were not complete during the specified time, the approval process began anew. This significantly impacted the study timeline.

Time constraints also affected the timing and length of interviews with the sex workers. Generally the sex workers began work in the late morning and served clients throughout the day and night. Therefore, interviews had to be conducted during 'work hours'. In this way, many girls did not want to sit through an hour interview, as this was time away from earning money. Some of the girls were also nervous and wary of being seen with a foreigner (even though interviews were conducted in a private room). A few of the girls left the interview for about 10 minutes to meet a client and returned to complete the interview. The researcher remained considerate and appreciative of the time offered by the girls during the interviews.

As the researcher is not from Viet Nam, this may be considered a limitation. Yet, certain literature (personal communication of publication by Jamie Urhig, UNAIDS advisor) suggests that in conducting interviews with sensitive subject matters, a foreigner may be able to elicit more detailed information as the participant does not feel judged or threatened (especially where there is a hierarchical system in place, such as in Viet Nam). The researcher has spent many years in South and South East Asia and has conducted studies with sensitive topics. This may have also reduced the limitations in data collection.

For interviewing young migrant sex workers, a male interpreter was used. While this could have caused problems, it eventually was discovered as a strength. It was found that information was given much more freely with the male interpreter whom the young women knew (as he works with an NGO) and with whom a trusted relationship had been developed. The local interpreter along with the approval of the PAC assisted in securing a private area for interviewing the young women.

The issue of comparability of samples may also have been a limitation or weakness in this study. Family data included only child migrants under the age of 16 years and the data from sex workers included mainly young women age 16 and over. While this may have limited the comparability of the study as the age groups compared differed, it did not limit the findings of the data, which was the more important concern for this study.

Shortly before gaining government permission for a field visit, the government conducted a 'Social Evils Campaign Round-up' of the sex workers. As sex work is illegal in Viet Nam, the girls were collected by police and taken to other areas or placed in rehabilitation camps. This limited the study in that the remaining sex workers went 'into hiding' and were difficult to access. In addition, following this, sex workers were highly suspicious and fearful of coming outside of the hotels or being seen with anyone. Fortunately, the relationship between the young women, the hotel owners and the assistant and interpreter assisted in gaining access and trust for interviews.

Overall, the research was successfully completed with much credit owed to the research assistants and translators.

## **4.9 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the methods used for this study. The qualitative methods chosen for this study were both appropriate and practical for understanding the complex issues related to exploitation through youth migration and sex work. Although the limitations were a challenging aspect to the research, significant and reliable data were collected.

Community members, families and young migrant women in sex work were interviewed to explore their perceptions and reasoning behind migration and sexual exploitation from all levels and to enable comparisons between their responses to be made. The following three chapters present the study results.

## **5 Perceptions and Decisions Leading to Young Women's Migration**

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### **5.1 Introduction**

Migration of young women from rural to urban areas for employment may be an essential source of income for families in rural areas. The migration process is influenced at many different levels. As young women are encouraged to migrate they are exposed to many unfamiliar situations which often place them in a state of vulnerability.

This chapter presents the study findings on the decision-making process of a young woman leaving to the city, based on the reports of families who have sent a girl to the city, on key informant reports about how community attitudes and traditions influence youth migration, and from young women now living and working in sex work in the city, and the factors that push, pull and facilitate young women's migration leading to sexual exploitation. Given the sensitivity and complexity of the issue, this chapter compares the reports of families, children, and communities, to explore different perceptions and reports of factors which facilitates migration and eventual exploitation.

Each of the interviews explored the parents' perceptions of why their child had migrated, who was responsible for this decision, what influenced this decision, what was the awareness level, perceptions and expectations of the child's work in the city including any risks to their child. Similar issues were explored with key informants, and were compared to reports from the young women in sex work.

### **5.2 Findings**

#### **5.2.1 General results**

In the past five to ten years, child/youth migration has become a common form of supplementing the family income in Viet Nam. In all of the provinces visited, key informants reported that some form of youth migration took place. Several community representatives with little to no migration in their area reported that child migration was



due more to a trend, that is, a community norm in which it was viewed as acceptable and profitable to send a child to the city to supplement the family's income.

The actual number of youth who migrate to the city for employment are often inaccurate however, community representatives interviewed estimated that approximately 15 – 20% of children (both male and female) from their provinces migrate. Therefore, this can be seen as a successful means of increased income to the rural family.

### **5.2.2 Family influences and decision-making about migration**

In a society such as Viet Nam where filial piety and honouring one's parents is essential, an importance is ascribed to the decision-making process of the child's migration.

Each group of respondents were asked who made the decision for a child to migrate. As the quotes below illustrate, community members generally agreed that parents, most notably the father, were the primary decision-makers for a child's migration.

"Most parents don't take good care of their children and the children are forced to go to the city by their parents, although some go independently. But the children send a lot of money home to their families." (Nam Ha province Committee for Protection of Families and Children (CPFC))

"The breadwinner of the family is usually the one to decide if the daughter must migrate." (Pho Tho province, commune official)

Similarly, nearly all of the parents reported making the decision for their child to migrate. This decision appeared to have been most often made by the father and to a lesser extent by both parents or by the mother (usually in the absence of the father).

As illustrated by the following quotes, most commonly the father reported being the main decision-maker about his daughter's decision to migrate to help support the family. It was often reported as being the child's 'duty'.

"I made the decision for her to go to the city. She can help the family." (Father in Nam Ha province)

"A neighbour had work in the city, I told her to go so she could send money." (Father in Phu Tho province)

Other parents frequently stated that children either did not want to go or *"were willing to go because they understood the family situation"* (Phu Tho province).

“She did not want to go because all her friends are living here. But she understands the economic situation”. The family also stated that they felt “it was her duty to migrate to help the family.” (Nam Ha province)

Interestingly, in contrast to the parents and community members, when the young women (now working as sex workers in the city) were asked the same question about who made the decision for their migration, they often reported that they themselves had made the decision.

“I decided myself to leave and come here because I want to help my family because they are poor.” (Phuong – Do San)<sup>5</sup>

However, while the young women reported the decision was theirs, they were also compelled by family obligations.

“My family is poor, and I want to help them.” (Hoa – Do San)

Overall, this suggested that the daughter's decision to migrate was generally made by the parents, and when made by the daughter, was strongly influenced by the parents situation and feelings of obligation.

### **5.3 Poverty as the Impetus for Migration**

A dominant theme throughout the study was that of poverty as the key force behind migration. When asked about the reasons for migration, universally, parents, community members and children cited poverty as the main factor for migration. The majority of the community representatives also agreed that families sent their children due to the economic situation. However, many families interviewed had a television, VCR and radio (common wealth ranking indicators), which may indicate that the newly acquired wealth was a result of employing child migration in their family. In this way, the money may be profitable enough to supplement family income for necessities and material ‘luxuries’.

Many parents and community members viewed youth migration as a positive solution to poverty, as a result norms and attitudes adopted by communities may have facilitated youth migration with the acceptance of migration as a panacea for family poverty.

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<sup>5</sup> No names were taken during the interview process; pseudonyms have been given to the girls in place of their study code number.

"The community understands a poor family's situation and the need to send their child to work in the city." (Chinh Ly commune)

Others reported that their community *"understands the situation of poor families and understands the need for parents to send children regardless of the dangers"*.

### **5.3.1 Additional Reasons for Youth Migration**

One issue commonly raised as a reason for migration was that of school fees which were introduced as a result of Doi Moi. Although the majority of families interviewed had children who were sponsored, school fees were reported as being too taxing on the family income and were a main reason for children leaving school, therefore increasing their chances of migration. Community leaders reported a local law that waives school fees for poor families, however none of the families reported being able to access the fee waiver.

Households reported children generally leaving school from age 12-15 years. In addition, households and young women reported that the children who migrated commonly sent money home for the school fees of younger siblings.

Reports from one of the young women concurred with the parents; she migrated and began sex work to support her younger sister as illustrated in the following quote:

"If you are older sister and have younger sister who would like to continue studying – what would you do?" (Lien – Thien Loi Street)

This illustrated how the expense of school fees forced some young women out of school and into migration, young women also felt obligated to assist their siblings to remain in school.

### **5.3.2 Family Dysfunction**

During the interviews with community members, additional themes regarding the decision for a child to migrate surfaced. While the main theme was found to be poverty, family problems and perceived profit were also addressed.

"All the migrant children come from poor, dysfunctional or large families." (Nam Ha)

Findings from interviews with the young women agreed with this. Several of the sex workers interviewed migrated to the city to escape problems within the family.

"I left home because of big problems in my family – my father is an alcoholic. I decided to leave myself and work in a restaurant." (Thuy – Do San)

"I left home because of big trouble in my family. My mother and father divorce. When they divorce, my elder brother raised me but he is also poor so I think I have to go out to earn money. Someone in my village told me I could work dish washing in restaurant in Hai Phong and my brother was in prison." (Thu – Thien Loi)

So while poverty was collectively cited as the reason for youth migration, other push factors continued to play an important role. Family dysfunction and need for money for school fees emerged as push factors, while pull factors included the profitability of child work and a 'trend' or accepted norm within some communities.

### **5.3.3 Parents Knowledge, Perceptions, and Expectations**

Perceptions, expectations and knowledge of work in the city was used to understand what the three different groups thought about youth migration for employment and what they knew about the reality of their daughter's life in the city.

When parents of young women who had migrated were asked what work they thought their daughters did in the city, none reported that their daughters worked as sex workers, with the majority of parents reporting that she was a servant or worked in a restaurant:

"She went to Ho Chi Minh City four years ago with her younger sister to work as a domestic servant." (parent from Quang Tri province)

"She went with other villagers to Hanoi. The villager has a small café – she does housework and then helps in the café." (Pho Tho)

Three families reported that their daughters (approximately 14 years old) had been working as servants for about one year. Another family was not sure where their daughter was living or where she was employed. (Quang Tri province)

Young women were also asked about their perceptions of their employment before leaving the village. As most young women rarely arrive in the city without a job offer or

connection, it was through these connections that many of the young women began working at entertainment establishments (including restaurants). As the quotes below illustrate, although some young women were tricked into being brought to the hotels or karaoke bars, the majority thought that they would be working as a server in a bar.

"My friend told me that I would work in a restaurant." (Lien – Thien Loi)

"She (her friend) said I would work in a karaoke bar. My friend introduced me to this bar." (Phuong – Do San)

The young women often reported 'knowing the situation, but not the reality' of their work. When they discovered the reality of the type of work they would be doing in the city, they frequently reported keeping this information secret from their parents, instead telling their parents that they worked as servants or in another occupation other than sex work, as illustrated in the quotes below:

"I tell them (her family) that I work as a server in a restaurant." (Phuong – Do San)

"I know two other girls from my village that do this work. They also lie to their parents". (Duong – Do San)

It is quite understandable that the young women do not tell their families about their employment as a sex worker. However, it is difficult to understand why relatives, friends and even siblings who are aware of the reality would encourage others to enter this work. To explore this further, young women were asked if they had ever or would ever encourage a friend<sup>6</sup> to migrate. All of the young women reported that they had never and would never encourage anyone to migrate and enter sex work:

"I never recommend this work to a friend. I try my best to hide everything." (Kim – Thien Loi)

"I never tell anyone in the village (about my work) – no one knows. I know other girls that were deceived. I never recommend this work to anyone." (Bian – Thien Loi)

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<sup>6</sup> Although young women stated they were introduced by a friend, when asked if they had any friends working in sex work, they often stated that they did not. In this way, the researcher assumes that the term "friends" may mean young women of similar age from the same village or commune – an acquaintance. Possibly a 'western' concept of 'friend' is not appropriate in this context.

However, some of the young women speculated that friends in the village may be encouraged to follow them to the city because they are able to bring money back to their family and the young women now act and dress in a 'city manner'.

In contrast to the parents, community representatives were more open about what work they believe young women migrants do in the city. Their responses more openly acknowledged that some young women went into sex work:

"Girls who go to the city will eventually become prostitutes and will not return."  
(Don Xa commune leader)

While families reported that their daughters worked in the service industry, and daughters reported to their parents that they worked in the service industry, community members appeared to have an idea of the reality of the situation for some young women.

This data suggests that there were a variety of factors occurring at different levels that facilitated a girl's migration and her entry into sex work, and which kept her in the city. It also led to additional questions. Did the parents really know what was happening to their daughters? Was it denial or convenience or, were they truly unaware of her work? If that was the case, then how was it that community members knew young women may end up in karaoke bars, hotels and prostitution, but family members did not know this? If the young women were asked to migrate as the 'best decision' for the family, was the survival strategy of sacrificing one child to save the whole in the family's best interest? Did the family feel there was a sacrifice if they didn't believe/admit she was being sexually exploited? Or did the family feel that she was doing her duty and not being exploited at all?

## **5.4 Perceptions of Life in the City**

Parents were asked what they perceived life to be like for their daughter in the city, and whether there were any risks associated with migration.

The majority of the families reported that they had heard from their children that life in the city was difficult and the work was tough but 'due to the poverty, they must go'. This is illustrated in the quotes below:

"We know that life must be difficult for our children and there may be risks or dangers in the city but nevertheless we must send them due to the family situation." (Nam Ha)

To gain further information on what parents felt was happening to their daughter once in the city, parents were asked about the potential risks to their daughter.

The majority of the parents interviewed reported that there may be risks associated with their child/children working in the city. The risks mentioned included: 'illnesses', 'unlucky', and increased risk of social evils. Again, the parents stated that they were aware of the dangers/risks but "*due to the economic situation, the children must go*". This was a consistent theme throughout the study. An example of this can be seen in the case study presented below.

#### **Case Study**

A widowed mother had sent her 16 year old daughter to Can Tho province<sup>7</sup> to work. According to the mother, "*the uncle (of the migrant girl) visited the village and asked to take my daughter back to Can Tho with him to work in a restaurant there. The uncle wanted her (his niece) to "see the world". My daughter has not returned since leaving one year ago and she has not sent any money home to me (her mother)*". The mother was unsure what type of work the daughter performs but believes the daughter may be working in a restaurant in Can Tho.

The mother has received one letter from her daughter but said that she did not read it. She trusts her daughter is fine and stated that "*she is not aware of any risks in Can Tho*". The mother felt the daughter could find risks anywhere, '*even in the hometown*'. (Phu Tho province)

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<sup>7</sup> Can Tho Province is located in the south of Viet Nam and is a 'hot-bed' for the sex industry.

Parents frequently reported the possibility or potential for risks to their child, however, the information from the community representatives concerning risks to children were quite telling. There was a general consensus that child migrants may be exposed to social evils in addition to other risks:

"Families are aware of the dangers and exposure to social evils in the city." (Phu Tho)

The Committee for Population Families and Children also stated that they try to work with the families to reintegrate their child however, *"most parents do not want to bring their child back home"*.

Community members also reported awareness that migrant girls potentially become 'karaoke girls' (synonymous with sex worker in Viet Nam). This is illustrated in the quotes below:

"Girls who work in karaoke bars are at an increased risk of social evils." (Nam Ha)

"Girls who migrate may be sold into prostitution or exploited through child labour." (Quang Tri)

However they also reported that due to the economic circumstances, a family must send their child to work.

Two commune leaders reported limited risks to children who migrate:

"There are very few risks associated with child migration." (Phu Tho Van Han commune)

"Some parents cannot control their children and some parents send their child out and don't feel any risks associated with migration to the city." (Quang Tri)

Despite the fact that some parents and most community members felt there were risks associated with sending their daughter to the city, they overwhelmingly believed that they must send their child due to poverty in the family, as the quotes below illustrate:

"Children must go to work regardless of the risks involved because of poverty." (Phu Tho)

So while community authorities may be aware that children under 16 years should not be migrating to work as per Vietnamese law, they often considered it acceptable. The community's acceptance of this may have been an essential influential factor.



Parents reported that their daughters were working in a restaurant or as a domestic servant, yet they also often felt that there were some risks involved with living in the city. While some parents denied any risks, others reported an increased risk of social evils for their child but did not expand on this. Community members however appeared to be more aware of exactly what risks their children faced, namely social evils such as prostitution and HIV/AIDS. In contrast to this, two of the non-sending families reported that they did not want to send their child to the city because they did not want them exposed to dangers there.

This again raised the question; were families really unaware of what was happening and if so, how did community members living in the same village have a more thorough understanding? Although community members may have been to the city and were more aware of what was happening, wasn't it then their responsibility to educate the families? Was poverty the excuse rather than the impetus?

## **5.5 Profit and Poverty**

As pronouncements of poverty was the main reason reported by families, female migrant sex workers and communities as the force for migration and work in the city, data on remittances to the families was collected. Households and young women report that children brought on average 200,000 – 400,000 VND (\$13 - \$26) home every month. The majority of families reported using the money to pay for sibling's school fees and other living expenses. Expectation of profits from children was also likely to be an important factor in sending a child to the city. Parents, community members and young women all reported that observed affluence (the increased material wealth of families with child migrants) was fundamental to a parent's decision to send a child.

It is interesting to note that some community members reported that families may not send a child if it is not profitable. In one of the communes that had less migration than others, respondents were asked why they felt there was less migration in their commune compared to others. They reported less migration because *“the children who do migrate to work in the city do not bring money home thus the parents do not find it profitable”*.

Don Xa community representatives stated that they try to persuade families not to send their children to the city. However most families sent one child and some sent more than one. *"Girls bring much more money to the family than boys, even when they become karaoke girls".*

Families interviewed often reported that their children had not yet sent money home, although parental expectations of money are illustrated in the quotes below:

In one commune, only two of the nine children working sent money home. Nonetheless, families reported that they expected their children would send between 200,000 to 400,000 VND per month, *"like other children"*. (Nam Ha province)

*"We expect monetary support from our child and are waiting for money to arrive".*  
(Quang Tri province)

Families were also asked about the amount of time their children had been working in the city, as well as how long they expected them to remain there. While the amount of time differed between each family, generally parents reported that their child would stay in the city as long as they needed the money, or *"for a few years"*.

*"She will remain working in the city until there is no more work or for at least two more years."* (father from Nam Ha province)

*"...she will stay in Hanoi to work as long as the family needs money."* (father from Phu Tho province)

### **Case Study**

A family interviewed with migrant daughters reported that *"she went to Ho Chi Minh City four years ago with her younger sister to work as a domestic servant"*. The two girls were 14 years and 12 years old at the time of initial migration. The family reported the girls earn 300,000 VND and 250,000 VND per month each. The family stated they *"inform the girls when they need money and the girls will send it to us"*. They have a 13 year old son but do not want to send him to work and would like for him to continue with his education.

Sadly, when the young women were asked this same question, most were hopeful they could return home soon (within the next few months).

"I want to return to my village to work as a tailor." (Tien – Thien Loi)

"I want to return home at the end of this month. I want to do farming again."  
(Thanh – Do San)

These quotes illustrated how pressure from their family to remain working in the city could have been an important factor in keeping young women in sex work.

This case study demonstrated the expectations parents have for their children to remain in the city indefinitely as a secure source of income. It also exemplified that young women were willing to remain in the city working, in often times exploitative circumstances, in order to assist their families.

While young women interviewed found it important to help their parents and their siblings remain in school they also reported a hope that one day they could return home and live a 'normal life'.

## **5.6 Recruitment Networks**

People, notably female youth, would not have been able to migrate without opportunities and networks to facilitate their migration and work.

When asked about how they knew about migration and work in the city, families reported that they frequently found work (in the city) for their child through a relative, friend or neighbour.

"A neighbour introduced my daughter to someone in another province over one year ago and we believe she is living there." (Quang Tri)

When young women were asked the same question, how they found out about migration and work in the city, they most often reported that they were introduced to the idea of migration and work at the village level by a 'friend', sibling or villager. The following quotes illustrate this.

"My girlfriend (from the village) told me about working here because her boyfriend is a bar owner." (Lien – Thien Loi)

"My sister told me to come here (to the hotel/bar) to wash bowls." (Dao – Thien Loi)

"A woman from my commune told me to go to Do San to work as a dishwasher"  
(Bian – Thien Loi)

"The (hotel/bar) owner came to my village to ask me to work here (Do San) as a servant. He asked other girls in the village too." (Nga – Do San)

Data from the community representatives concurred with that of the families and the young women, that relatives may either initiate or facilitate migration:

"The family often has relatives that will assist the child in finding employment."  
(Pho Tho)

In addition to family and relatives encouraging youth to migrate, it appeared from the interviews, from the households, community members and the young women, that returning migrants often either directly or indirectly influenced the decision of other youth in the village in the migration and work process. The quotes from community respondents referred to reports that returning migrants may have actively encouraged others to migrate:

"They will often return and encourage others to migrate." (Phu Tho)

In addition, another issue that emerged during the interviews was that a family or individual's decision to migrate may be influenced by the increased financial status of her friend's families in the village. Reports from the young women, parents and community members also agreed with this concept.

"Families receive a lot of support from their children. As others in the community see this, they also want to send their child". (Pho Tho province)

Generally, the data illustrated the way in which social and family networks facilitated migration; with those returning from the city recruiting within their village, and in this way networks and specific patterns of migration were formed in each village.

### **5.6.1 The Role of Networks**

In interviewing the four families that had not sent children to the city, it was found that two themes emerged. The first was that families and communities reported they did not want their children to be unskilled labourers and did not want them exposed to dangers in the city.

One father interviewed was married with three children. He stated that *“in the future when they meet difficulties and the children have finished school, he will send them to the city to find a stable job there”*. He did not want his children to be unskilled laborers and hoped he could support their education if they maintained good performance.

One commune reported that no families sent children under the age of 16 to work because they are aware of the dangers. Community representatives reported that the People's Committee must inform families of the dangers of life in the city and persuade parents to send their children to school.

The second, more surprising theme was that households and communities lacked information on sending. In these cases it appeared that this was due to a lack of networks. For example, one commune noted that migration was not common in their area because there were no relatives or 'middlemen' to introduce them to migration and they lacked information on migration. The respondents stated that if there were relatives to introduce families to migration it would be good in order to earn a higher income. (Phu Tho)

In one family interviewed, the father had sent his son to work in the construction industry in the city. He also had several daughters who had all left school at age 11. The father reported that *“I have no idea about where to send my daughters or what they could do in the city but if I had the information I would send them”*.

In the other case of poorer families who did not send their children, one father said when his 12 year old son was old enough he would send him.

The findings then suggested that migration of children would not take place without these established networks of friends, family and returning migrants. Networks were the main contact point for the idea to migrate (that made the notion of migration feasible), and facilitated the migration process and employment in the city.

## **5.7 Limitations**

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, the limitations for this study were numerous. Government regulations were extremely strict in Viet Nam. As a result, in at least two of the provinces, commune leaders, district and commune police escorted the researcher

and assistant to each household for family interviews. The entourage of officials may have biased the information given by family members.

A limitation or bias may have been caused by a disproportionate number of household interviews taking place in NGO sponsor families. However, the information may not be prejudiced as the NGO works with the poorest families in the communes and it was most commonly reported that the poorest families send their children to the cities. Every effort was taken to interview families who were both sponsor families and non-sponsor families.

Other limitations pertained to the sensitivity of the topic and to the suspicion it aroused with government officials both in the rural and urban areas. With the support of the collaborating NGOs, interpreters, and the participants much rich data was collected.

Finally, the researcher recognises that the families interviewed were not matched to the sex workers interviewed. Ethically and realistically (under government and time constraints) this could not be accomplished, however, the main theme under study was not to match the participants but to understand and compare their perceptions and influences which lead to the decisions of migration.

## **5.8 Discussion**

As demonstrated in the conceptual framework, youth migrate for a multitude of reasons. This chapter assists in the understanding of the various levels of influences on a youth to migrate and what keeps her in the city. Young women are pushed by their families and their feelings of obligations and are pulled by employment in the city.

Youth who work in the city are an important part of the family in assisting with monetary support for parents and siblings. While not all of the youth send money home, money sent home by some youth is commonly used for repaying family debts, purchasing food and paying for sibling's school fees. Although not reported by families but observed and supported by literature (Kaime-Atterhog 2000, Le Bach 2002), material luxuries such as television and radio are also purchased with income from daughters' earnings.

Youth migration may be seen as having both negative and positive aspects. The majority of the families and community representative interviews found that the main

advantage to migration is an increased income. The main disadvantage is an increased exposure to social evils, and the possibility of bringing social evils back to the community. While some parents and community members state that migrant children (especially girls) are at an increased risk of social evils (i.e., sex work and drug use), they are also adamant that they 'still must go'. It then appears that the need or desire for increased income overrides the potential harm to their daughter.

Global literature cites that the decision for a young woman to migrate is generally a family survival strategy (Anker 2000; Siddiqi and Patrinos 2002; Raymond et. al. 2002; Kelly and Le Bach 1999). While children migrate to assist their family, it is often the family who are responsible for that decision. Similarly in this study, parents have a major role in the migration of their child.

Additional push factors that surfaced include the community's acceptance and/or encouragement of employing youth migration, values and traditions such as filial piety and networks which facilitate migration and entry into sex work.

The pull factors for migration which became apparent encompass the daughter's chance to assist the family and more importantly her misunderstanding of the job offer in the city.

What emerged in this study is that a significant predictor for sending a child is the existence of networks within the community. Migration of children often takes place through the encouragement of friends or family members who have already migrated or view a child's work in the city as profitable. However, while the majority of young women are recruited through friends or relatives, none of them report ever having encouraged others to migrate.

The small sample of non-sending families assists in more clearly understanding why some families choose not to send. Only one family preferred to keep their children in school and at home. The other families do not send because they lack information and contacts for sending their child. Although this aspect was not expected, these reports concur with the previous reports and data found in the literature that argues migration could not take place without networks and connections (Beesey et. al. 2001). This supports the conceptual framework that highlights the importance of facilitating networks.

The majority of migrant sex workers interviewed report informing their parents erroneously of their work in the city. Parents may be misinformed by their daughter in order to avoid the shame and stigma attached to sex work. As a result, nearly all of the parents state that their daughter reports working as a domestic servant in the city. None of the parents report ever having visited their daughter to confirm this. Additionally, parents may suspect that their daughter works in the entertainment industry but do not want to disclose this information. It was found that many community members report awareness that girls often lie about being domestic servants and are known to work in karaoke and other entertainment establishments. As a result, the networks and webs of deception continue to obscure a true understanding of the scope of young women's exploitation.

Creating awareness about the risks of youth migration and sexual exploitation and helping community representatives and families find alternative options to sending a child to work in the unskilled labour sector in the city may help to decrease the continued exploitation of youth, particularly girls, through migration and sex work.

## **5.9 Policy Implications**

The development and implementation of national policies to protect youth are essential. While policies regarding migration in Viet Nam do exist, they are not well understood by those meant to enforce them and are therefore commonly ineffective.

Legal policy related to migration, child migration, child labour, and exploitation is generally convoluted and contradictory at the local level where it is often meant to be enforced. Government organisations promote migration while NGOs try to prevent migration and child labour. This leads to confusion, lack of understanding of laws and policies relating to these issues, and lack of means to enforce them. Discussed below are the current policies in place and the implications of the findings for policy.

In this study, many of the families and communities had a cursory understanding of risks involved in the migration of young women, and it appeared that the risks outweighed the need for income. However, if they truly understood the exploitative forms of labour their child was engaged in to assist the family income would this become a protective factor? Included in the perceptions and understandings of risk are



the findings that indicate parents may be aware of their daughter's work in the city. This denial or lack of openness facilitates the exploitation of female youth.

Many families stated that their child was taken out of school (considered dropped out) by the parents or left school because the parents could not afford the school fees for their child/children. (One child was taken out of school and sent to the city to work in order to pay for the NGO home repair project). Many of the families interviewed stated that their child's money sent from the city was used to pay for their siblings school fees. Although, the majority of the communes stated that they had reduced or waived school fees for poorer families. However, the reduction or waiver of school fees did not seem to be effective in abating dropout rates. Organisations could work with the commune officials or schools to create a better link between poor families who cannot afford the school fees and government services to reduce or waive the school fees.

Migration exists globally and can be beneficial to an individual and society. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Resolution 923 (LXXI-November 25, 1995) states: "IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society..." (IOM 1999: 4-5). However, more information is needed to understand the gender inequality and the gendered dimensions of migration policies (Raymond et. al. 2002) in order to ensure migrants benefit from the process. Migration policies must work to protect and empower women and girls with knowledge to make informed decisions and develop and awareness of potential risks associated with migration.

National laws and policies exist to prevent child labour and sexual exploitation of children. However, penalties and enforcement of laws often do not eliminate exploitation of children/youth as they do not commonly address the realities faced by poor families (Siddiqi and Patrinos 1995). The contribution the young migrant sex worker can make to her family's income can be essential to her family's survival. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) suggests that policies and programmes should supply families with economic incentives that may help enable families to stop having their children work (Anker and Melkas 1996). Although as the data from this research points out, even those parents who had children sponsored by an NGO and were involved in income generation projects, continued to view their child's migration and work as more profitable than other sources of income. This begs the question; are policies aimed at poverty alleviation effective in the child/youth migration process or will

parents continue to employ this as a viable and profitable means to increase their standard of living? The findings suggest that organisations must refocus their efforts not on poverty alleviation alone, but also include education and awareness.

Overall, the attitudes and views related to child economic migration varied from commune to commune and village to village. The primary recommendation for interventions is to conduct awareness programs on child migration and sexual exploitation of young migrant women at the commune and village level in order to educate parents and community representatives about all aspects of these issues. Increased awareness on youth migration and sexual exploitation is necessary so that families and young women can make an informed decision about migrating and work opportunities for unskilled labourers in the city.

While parents, young women, and community members reported that poverty was the primary reason for youth migration and exploitation, it was also elucidated that migration could not occur without networks and contacts. Furthermore, the ideas and expectations of increased income through employing child migration could not be conceptualised without the existence of these networks. Of course poverty does exist, whether real or perceived. However, the data from literature and interviews with families, young women and community members suggest that multiple factors influence and facilitate the decision to migrate and the exploitation of young women in Viet Nam.

As a result of these multi-factorial influences on young women's migration and sexual exploitation, it is fundamental that policy makers and organisations working with families, migrants (especially young migrant women) and communities understand the need for collaboration. Currently, the issues of migration, sexual exploitation and infection are being treated as separate entities. In order for programmes to be more effective in assisting young women, these issues must be addressed in their entirety rather than in discrete stages of her life. Exploitation through migration and sex work is an issue overwrought with complexities, and must be addressed comprehensively.

## **5.10 Conclusion**

In this chapter, factors within the community and family which led to migration were discussed. It was found that the decision-making process within the family coupled with existing norms and networks within the community were key factors fuelling young

women's migration in Viet Nam. It was also found that the father most commonly made the decision for his daughter to migrate and through obligation or honour to assist the family she accepted. A job offer at the village level through networks often prompted the youth migration process.

Although parents may be aware of the risks to their daughters, the overwhelming majority felt that it was their child's duty to migrate to help alleviate poverty in the family.

Policy efforts must reflect the multiple dynamics and factors involved in child/youth economic migration in order to prevent sexual exploitation of young women as a result of the migration process.

The following chapter will examine the youth migrant's entry into the city and sex work.

## **6 Entry into Sex Work: Coercion, Exploitation and Violence**

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### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 5 discussed the facilitating factors leading to a daughter's migration to the city to assist the family with income. This chapter presents the findings on the recruitment process and entry into sex work, the first sex experience with a client, experience of violence, exploitation and hopes for the future.

Twenty sex workers were interviewed at entertainments venues for this part of the study. This chapter focuses on information from the young migrant women. The young women were asked to talk about their expectations, how they came to the city, the circumstances and decision-making processes that encouraged their migration and facilitated their entry into sex work. The young women were also asked to talk about their experiences with clients and their lives in the city. The data was then compared to that of the rural household interviews and the key informant interviews to gain an insight into the differences and commonalities in perceptions.

#### **6.1.1 Sample Description: Who are the Young women?**

Eighteen of the twenty young women sex workers interviewed were in their late-teens to early twenties. They had all migrated from a rural area and work (at the time of the interview) as sex workers at an entertainment venue. The number of clients each girl had ranged from 4-7 per day. The hotel/bar owner (pimp) charges the client approximately \$8 per sex act and pays the young women a fraction of this amount (an approximate average of 20,000 (\$1.20) to 40,000 VND per client). In general, the young women work from around 10am to midnight. It is reported that the busiest time of the day is around noon when state employees take their lunch break and weekends are busiest with tourists. According to literature, the employer (pimp) generally makes around \$2,000 per month from sex sold at his/her establishment, making this a highly profitable business (Le Bach 2002). The hotel owners are often female and come from the same village or have networks with certain villages or communes (Le Bach 2002).

The sex industry here operates openly, although the average person may not realise that the waitress, hair dresser or seamstress also sells sex.

Unlike other areas in Viet Nam or the Mekong region, a girl's family is not given money upfront (as the vast majority of the families reported not being aware that their daughter had become a sex worker (see Chapter 5; 5.6.1)). If an intermediary brought the girl to the hotel/bar, a small sum (USD \$20-50) was generally given to them.

## **6.2 Findings**

### **6.2.1 The Recruitment Process**

As has been explained in Chapter 5, young women would generally not migrate without established networks and contacts. However, a common element of the networks appeared to be deception about the nature of employment. The decision to migrate (either by the parents or the girl) frequently took place after an offer of work had been made by a contact. Although in some cases the families sought out networks to facilitate the migration for work process. It was most commonly reported by the young women that friends who were already working in the sex industry recruited them from their village but did not mention what would be expected. In other instances it appears as if the recruitment was through deception. The young women were informed by a friend, family member, villager or intermediary that they would be provided with a service job, only to find themselves lured into selling sex. These situations are illustrated in the interviews below.

A few of the young women were tricked into leaving their home and becoming sex workers.

"My sister told me to come here (to the hotel/bar) to wash bowls. One week after that I began with sex work. My villagers think I am a garment worker." (Thanh – Do San)

"The (hotel/bar) owner came to my village to ask me to work here (Do San) as a servant. He asked other girls in the village too. My friend and I came with the man here – my friend already went back. He said we would work as servants...we never work as servant, after one week I found out about sex work. My parents think I am a market seller in Hai Phong." (Nga – Do San Township)

"I have an aunt working in Hai Phong, I work for her as a servant – my Uncle is (molesting) me. I was tired of the work (I went once) in a cyclo around the city and he (the cyclo driver) showed me here (the bar) with the price of 500,000 Viet

Nam dong to the cyclo driver from the bar owner. The bar owner said I must receive clients because he paid 500,000 for me. Many drug users living with me in the bar – my money was stolen today so I cannot go back home – is impossible now. I live with 4 bar owners and 8 sex workers in a house. My aunt didn't want me to leave and my uncle also wanted me to stay for his reasons. I never told anyone about my uncle, I don't want my parents to be worried about that. And my aunt doesn't know anything. My parents think I work in shoe factory and rent in a boarding house. I return home every weekend." (Hien – Thien Loi Street)

"A woman from my commune told me to go to Do San to work as a dishwasher. I discussed with my parents and they agreed I could work as a servant. I came with the woman to Do San and (she) gave me to the bar owner. When I got there I was forced to sell sex. I was locked in a room and after one week they sell my virginity to a middleman. " (Bian – Thien Loi)

While young women felt the decision for them to migrate was based on a legitimate job offer, it was only once they arrive in the city that they comprehend they would be selling sex.

At the village level the young women may have felt a sense of empowerment to be able to migrate for employment. However, when they arrived in the city and were lured or forced into sex work they often reported feeling a sense of disempowerment.

### **6.2.2 Respondent's Awareness About Work**

The young women were asked about their awareness of the job offer and what they actually understood it to mean. The respondents could be divided into 4 main categories: 1) Those that chose to enter sex work and had previously had intercourse, therefore understood what to expect (2 women); 2) those that reported voluntarily entering sex work but had not previously had intercourse and therefore had a limited understanding of what would be experienced (2 young women); 3) those that reported they agreed to work in a service or entertainment venue, were virgins and did not know they would be selling sex or what to expect (12 young women); and 4) those that were tricked/forced into sex work, were still virgins before entering sex work and did not know what to expect (4 young women).

Four of the young women reported that they voluntarily entered into sex work, as the money made in sex work far exceeded what could be earned in a factory. Although these young women were often not aware of the conditions in which they would work in the sex industry nor the consequences of their choice. Two of these women reported

'knowing what was expected of sex work', were older (24 and 27 years) and had previously had sex with a non-client partner. However, the majority of young women were not aware of what they would be doing or about the physiological, emotional and psychological implications of sex work.

Sixteen of the young women were aware that they were migrating to the city to work in an entertainment venue (2 of these reported they would possibly sell sex) and were introduced to the hotel/bar owner by a 'friend'. However, the young women often reported that they thought they were going to work in a bar, but not in sex work. In addition, as 18 of the 20 young women reported being virgins prior to entering sex work, their understanding of sex and more importantly sex work may have been limited or second-hand at best. The following quotes illustrate two different levels of understanding of the job offer and the reality:

"My friend told me I can make money and she made it clear about my job. My friend told me something about the job – but not exactly reality." (Hoa – Do San)

"My friend told me about work here and I followed her. She said I would work in a karaoke bar. I realised after coming here I would do this work (sex work)." (Phuong – Do San)

Even though a few young women had made the decision to do sex work, this often this did not mean that they understood what they were really expected to do. Once the young women realized what sex work actually meant they first report feeling frightened by the first sex act and then a feeling of resignation.

### **6.2.3 First Sex with Client**

Violence and fear was a reoccurring theme throughout the data findings as sex workers discussed forced sex as their first sexual experience with a client.

The young women who reported voluntarily entering into sex work (as virgins), also reported that their first sex experience with a client was frightening. However, the vast majority (16 out of 20) of the young women interviewed did not enter sex work voluntarily and although some did not describe forced sex, they were also scared by the first sex experience with a client.

"I was very frightened during the first sex act – no one explained to me what would happen." (Anh – Thien Loi)

The reports suggested that forced sex was the norm for initiating the young women into sex work. Nearly all of the young women interviewed reported being forced by the hotel/bar owner to have sex with customers both for their first sexual encounter and subsequent clients.

"When I had my first sexual client, I cried. The bar owner arranged for my sex. The bar owner told me to come to a room and take some medicine and I fell asleep. When I woke up I realize I lost my virginity. I stayed at that bar for one and a half years. I never told anyone about my first experience. I have not returned to my home – I have no where to go." (Thu – Thien Loi)

"I worked as servant for one day – then the bar owner said I had to makeup (put on makeup). I asked why I have to makeup. The bar owner continued making questions – 'what were you here (for)?'. The bar owner said I must receive clients to repay debt<sup>8</sup>. For the first and second client I was against receiving clients. The third client came into room, I took off my clothes and accepted. I don't care what happen to me and I was crying. The first time I felt nothing, I don't care what happens." (Hien – Thien Loi)

"I didn't want to have sex but he (the bar owner) said if I had sex he would bring me back home. A day after that I had to receive 4 to 7 clients, one month after I still did not receive money from the bar owner – he did not permit me to go home." (Bian – Thien Loi)

The young women often felt a loss of power and control of their situation especially during the first sex act when they did not know what would take place, what they were expected to do and how they would be treated.

In addition, for the first sex act with a client many of the young women did not (or were not permitted) to use a condom as the majority of the young women had been bought for their virginity. (These issues will be discussed further in Chapter 7.) So while young migrant women reported a possible 'understanding' or expressed their expectation of their employment in the city, the harsh reality for most was quite different from their original perceptions.

## **6.2.4 Hope for the Future**

Expectations and hopes for the future were discussed with the young women. Prior to leaving the village, many of them reported feeling apprehensive although they

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<sup>8</sup> This girl was sold to the bar by a cyclo driver – therefore incurring debt.



expected that they would bring honour to their family through working to assist the household income. The young women frequently reported expectations of having a 'good' job and a good life in the city, these expectations changed once in the city. When asked about their hopes for the future, the respondents were less positive.

Many of the young women felt there was little to hope for, however, some of them dreamed of saving enough money to leave sex work. While friends success stories fuelled the migration of young women from the village to the city, the young women who felt limited options to leave, hoped for a more positive life one day.

"My dream is for detox and drug treatment and something meaningful in life."  
(Hoang – IDU/SW – Thien Loi)

"I wish to have capital to become a vendor and seller in the street not to do work like this." (Kim – Thien Loi)

"I want to return home at the end of this month. I want to do farming again."  
(Thanh – Do San)

Many of the young women said that they wanted to or were going to leave sex work 'by the end of the month' or 'by Tet holiday' (6 months from interview). However, one sex worker that had been interviewed two years earlier had also stated she was leaving sex work within a month. The hope of earning and saving enough money in order to leave sex work was apparent throughout the conversations with the young women.

The majority of the young women, most notably those that were younger and newly arrived, felt that they would only stay in sex work until they could earn enough money to send home; however, the 'older' women knew the reality of the situation and had been in sex work for several years.

Some of the young women stated that they would marry and may even return to the village to find a husband. Interviews with the parents concurred with this, however during the months of interview process the investigators were unable to locate any young woman who had returned to her village after migrating. In addition, parents also stated that they expected their daughter to remain working in the city 'for a few years or until there is no more work' (Chapter 5). In this way, the young women felt a sense of obligation to continue working, yet had hope that one day they could return home.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study**

The inherent challenges to conducting research on sensitive issues such as sex, violence and sex work could be considered a limitation to this study. In addition, conducting research in a country that does not acknowledge the existence of brothels or sex work and has developed a legal framework of prevention of 'social evils', created many further constraints on the study.

Limitations of the interviews with the sex workers were both internal and external. The internal limitations included the principal investigator being a non-Vietnamese, and the government limitations placed on the research due to this.

The external limitations encompassed a broad range of government requirements and restrictions. The government approval process for interviewing sex workers (who are often not recognized due to their illegal status both as migrants and sex workers) was stringent and time consuming. Additionally, the paramount limitation was the government system of 'social evils'. One week prior to the interviews a government round-up of sex workers in Hai Phong had taken place. Therefore, the remaining sex workers went 'underground', in this way it was extremely difficult to access the sex workers and to gain their trust.

Additionally, the sensitive nature of the topic and the age and nature of work of the participants proved to be a challenge. Under any circumstances it is often difficult to elicit information from teenagers and young women but even more difficult when the young women are working in a profession that is stigmatised. Fortunately, with the support and experience of both the assistant/interpreter and the researcher, valuable data was shared by the young women participants.

### **6.4 Discussion of the Results**

All of the sex workers reported migrating to the city due to family dysfunction or desire to help the family with an additional income. Like sex work elsewhere, in northern Viet Nam sex work is extremely stigmatizing and is considered a 'social evil'. Therefore, the young women do not correctly inform anyone in their family or village of their work. The young women reported that they tell their families they are working as a domestic servant, in a restaurant or other establishment. This information agrees with the data

collected from the parents. The majority of parents reported their daughters working as domestic servants (see Chapter 5; 5.4).

Although the majority of the young women state that they were told they would be working in an entertainment establishment and possibly even selling sex to clients, they all felt that they were not informed or did not fully understand the 'reality' of the situation. There may be a more romantic idea or notion of singing in a karaoke bar or having rich city men fall in love and marry them. Once the young women are initiated into sex work a more profound understanding of their situation occurs.

The young women interviewed commonly are not working to pay off debt. However a few young women reported paying off the debt of living expenses. Although the majority of young women are not indebted, they receive only a fraction of the money made from their services. In addition, the young women are not usually bonded and are allowed to come and go freely from the establishment. However, the hotel owners may withhold money at times, as a means to control or coerce the young women. Overall, the young women report not returning home for a visit unless they have enough money to bring to the family.

Violence and coercion are major themes throughout their stories. 18 of the 20 young women were virgins prior to entering sex work. Even though some report knowing they would work in an entertainment or service venue, their expectations were not what took place in reality. Nearly all of the young women report forced sex as their initiation into sex work. The young women also state that after the initial forced sex, they felt resigned to sex work. Many of the young women described their rape for the first time. While this was difficult for the young women, sharing their story for the first time may also be therapeutic for some as they reported not having been able to share their story with anyone as yet.

The young women are aware (at varying levels) of the risks of sex work but are willing to continue with risky behaviours of sex work due to the money it provides to themselves and their families. Other emergent themes with regard to risky behaviour with minimal personal risk perception include condom use with boyfriends. (This is discussed in detail in the following chapter.)

## 6.5 Policy Implications

Although sex work is not new to Viet Nam, this mass migration of young women to the city and into sex work is relatively new. Since the economic reform in the late 1980s to mid-1990s the wealthier, more industrialized cities now attract people from poorer rural areas. Parents and community representatives were asked how long youth have been migrating. They commonly reported within the past 5-10 years, *“before that time everyone was poor the same”*.

The gap between rich and poor continues to widen while increasing expectations produce both real and perceived needs among populations, principally those in poor rural areas. These expectations may be used to base a family or individual economic decision for survival or upward social mobility (Le, 2002). Poverty alleviation programs are not necessarily the answer as many of those interviewed in this study fell under the category of perceived poverty rather than absolute poverty. Therefore policy makers must address economic issues and policies related to poverty alleviation to find more effective strategies in dealing with poverty and migration.

In the past, Viet Nam's answer was to create new economic zones (factory zones) and encourage migration of rural people to these areas. However, this has significantly increased the numbers of youth migrating to find employment in the unskilled labour sector. As young women continue to migrate they will also continue to be sexually exploited by others. In this way, policy and interventions must be aimed at protecting migrants.

The decision to migrate and more importantly entry into sex work is complex. For some young women this employment is seen as the only viable option, for others it is a means to make more money than could be earned in a factory or rice field. Young women and their families should be made aware of the actualities of potential work in the city and the reality of sex work in order to make an informed decision.

Interventions for preventing youth sex work and assisting those already in sex work should be addressed at multiple levels; national, communal, familial and individual levels in order to ensure that programmes are comprehensive and to address root causes.

Interventions and education should also be addressed according to the demand. An important point that is not often researched related to demand was cited by Anderson and O'Connell (2003); those that buy sex from a sex worker, especially at a young age (teen boys) will continue to do so. Therefore prevention efforts targeting teenage boys may be effective in reducing the demand presently and in the future.

It is also important to link human rights policies with health policies in order to ensure the rights of all sex workers, those who made an informed decision to enter the trade and those who were exploited into the trade (Loff et. al. 2000). Much of the literature points to sex work as the 'only option' for many young women. However, if it is conceivable that this is a best option then it should also be apparent that there must be changes in international laws and policies which aim to protect women and promote equitable work for them. In this way sex workers may have increased access to services, legal representation and documentation. "Rights instruments should not contribute to the vulnerability of populations to disease, they should aim to diminish this vulnerability" (ibid).

Finally, as Parker (1996) stated, we all vary greatly as individuals in terms of context of risk, social vulnerability, survival strategies, stigmatizations, local rationalities, religion and social structures. Planning, research, policy and interventions for working with sex workers must reflect all of these dimensions in order to be effective.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the young migrant woman's recruitment process, entry into sex work and experiences as a sex worker.

Many factors are at play for these processes to take place. Prior to leaving the village many young women are given a job offer, it is at this point that the young women develop expectations of what they will do in the city. The majority (16 of 20) of the young women expected to work in the service or entertainment venue, however it was only after they had their first sexual experience with a client that expectations turned to reality. The young women are hopeful that someday they can return to their families or work in a job that is not highly stigmatised and where they can feel empowered<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> It is recognised that some young women enter sex work as a chosen profession and may feel empowered through this profession.

In the next chapter, the power and vulnerability of sex workers is discussed. These include condom use and negotiation, and vulnerability to violence, infection and injection drug use and a sex workers ability to assert power and control at different stages in her life.

## **7 Vulnerability and Power: How sex work affects the vulnerability of young migrant women**

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### **7.1 Introduction**

A sex worker, most notably a young migrant sex worker, is affected at various levels by what occurs in her life. This chapter discusses how 'what is going on' in the lives of these young women interviewed affects their vulnerability.

This can be used to look at the 'life cycle' of the sex workers in this setting. In addition, it discusses the interviews with young women who had been working in sex work for different lengths of time and so ... at different stages of their career. It also considers how the expectations, perceptions, and realities of the young women affect their decision-making, their power and control.

The stages of the journey from the village into sex work have been discussed in the previous chapters, therefore this chapter begins with her first sexual debut, then moves to her ability to negotiate condom use, knowledge and access to condoms, ongoing sexual negotiations and relationships, potential for drug use and how her power and control changes at each stage.

#### **7.1.1 Methods**

Of the young women interviewed, each had different personal experiences that have lent to her vulnerability through each stage.

The young women in sex work interviewed were asked questions about their experiences with clients and condom use with clients. They were also asked to speak about if and why they use condoms, in the past and presently, where they learned about condom use and the challenges/risks of sex work. The following sections will discuss the responses from the 20 sex workers interviewed.

## **7.2 Findings**

### **7.2.1 Condom use with First Client**

First sex with a client most commonly took place shortly after arriving in the city, as reported by the sex workers interviewed. As discussed in the previous chapter, the majority of young women did not have a choice in their initiation of sex.

While the majority of young women reported condom use with clients, they also reported that they did not have the 'power' to insist on condom use, especially at the initiation of sex.

Nearly all (16 of 20) of the young women interviewed reported that they did not have a 'choice' in their initiation into sex and sex work. Forced sex was the norm (see Chapter 6; 6.4.3 ) for these young women. In addition, for the first sex act with a client many of the young women did not (were not permitted) to use a condom.

"For first time virginity broken (we didn't use) no condoms." (Dao – Thien Loi)

As the majority of the young women had been bought for their virginity so that the client was not at risk of infection, and hence did not want to use a condom. At this stage, the young women were extremely vulnerable and lacked power to control their situation. While risk can be seen as increasing over time (i.e., more clients, exposure to drug use, movement to street based – all of these will be discussed in the following sections) it was at this first stage when a sex worker may have been most vulnerable and must adjust quickly to her new lifestyle.

### **7.2.2 Knowledge about Condom Use**

The young women were asked about their condom use and why (and if) they used condoms. They generally reported limited knowledge of HIV/AIDS and condom use while still in the village. It was frequently reported that they had learned about condom use through 'older girls' working at the bar/hotel.

"Old girls teach me about condoms in the bar. I never heard about HIV in my village." (Dao – Thien Loi)

"I didn't know about it (condom use) before leaving my village." (Bian – Thien Loi)



Many of the young women reported learning about condom use for the first time after they had already been initiated into sex work. When the young women first arrived their low knowledge levels equalled lower levels of power (i.e. lack of knowledge about condom use and negotiation). After first sex, at this stage in sex work there was a sharp learning curve which may have led to a decrease in risk through the newly acquired skills to negotiate and use condoms. New young sex workers reported learning from the more seasoned sex workers about HIV/AIDS/STIs and how to prevent infection.

When a condom was used with clients, the sex workers reported having to purchase it themselves and initiate its use. Condoms were most commonly bought by the sex worker; it was reported that the client rarely brought his own condom. The sex workers were able to purchase the condoms at a pharmacy or sometimes the hotel/bar owner sold them to the young women.

"I get condoms from the pharmacist and now the bar owner. I use condom for STI and pregnancy (prevention). I heard about HIV positive through mass media before coming here and after that (I) strengthen my knowledge (here in Hai Phong)." (Lien – Thien Loi)

This quote illustrates that while young women initially do not have the choice to use a condom, the data suggests that in later stages they have acquired knowledge about condom use and are able to purchase and potentially negotiate with clients.

### **7.2.3 Difficulties with Condom Negotiation**

Although young women reported the ability to purchase condoms locally, they also reported being afraid to be seen with condoms outside the hotel/bar as this is grounds for arrest (proof of being a sex worker). Young women and key informants interviewed also stated that male clients do not want to be seen with condoms because they were afraid that police or their wife may find them. Therefore, the responsibility of obtaining the condom belonged to the sex worker, while the power to negotiate its use generally belongs to the client.

An additional aspect of the difficulties in negotiating condom use arose with the threat of violence.

Client violence and fear were a constant undercurrent for the sex workers. Many women interviewed (especially the younger women) were afraid of the clients and knew there was a high risk of violence.

"I know this job is very dangerous. I know the dangers of drunk clients. I would like to have another job. Some days ago I was very afraid." (Kim – Thien Loi)

"Many clients are very cruel and they fight with me if I cannot satisfy them. Some girls are used to it – I cannot." (Hien – Thein Loi)

It was reported by the sex workers and key informants interviewed that clients often mistreated the young women as they had paid for their services. Violence experienced by the young women may have increased their feelings of powerlessness and lack of control. Negotiating condom use was reported by the young women as difficult, when adding violence to the situation, condom negotiation was challenging at best. However, there were areas in the sex workers' lives that they reported feeling in control and empowered, this was generally with a non-client/ non-paying partner (boyfriend).

#### **7.2.4 The Power to Negotiate Love and Condom Use**

It appeared from the reports of the young women that negotiating power for condom use increased after the initial stage. Many of the young women had learned about HIV/STIs from other sex workers in the hotel/bars. The majority of the young women reported condom use with clients after the first sex act. While the young women reported condom use, this did not always mean that condom use was proper or consistent. In fact, in one interview, the sex worker reported condom use, however she also reported having had an STI, therefore although the young women are reporting condom use, it cannot be assumed that they have the power to negotiate its use in all situations.

However, although young women did seem to increase their ability to negotiate condoms with clients they also seemed to become vulnerable in other ways, through their non-commercial relationships that developed over time. Even if condom use was reported with clients, those young women with boyfriends reported that condoms were not used within this 'love' relationship – irrespective of whether the partner knew that she was a sex worker or not.

"I have a boyfriend but we do not use condoms. My boyfriend doesn't know what work I do. I will never tell my boyfriend what kind of work I did here." (Thi – Do Son)

"I use condoms with clients. I do not use (condoms) with my boyfriend. He is a vendor. He knows I am doing this work (sex worker)." (Hoa – Do Son)

At this stage, many of the sex workers have been involved in sex work for a few months and are able to develop meaningful relationships in which they feel they may have a sense of equality or respect. While this has increased a sex workers power, it may also increase her vulnerability to infection (through not using condoms) and to drug use or both. Generally, the sex workers reported that their boyfriends were unskilled migrant labourers. They often met the boyfriends through their work as many boyfriends were regular clients who then become boyfriends. In this way, both were in high risk groups and are at risk for infection. Therefore, power and risk may exponentially increase.

### **7.2.5 Affects of Social Evils on Vulnerability**

There were several constants that emerged with regard to how the underlying theme affects vulnerability. The first, exposure to HIV/AIDS has been discussed. The second was the conservative socialist legal environment in which the sex workers live in Viet Nam.

The social evils approach to sex work and drug use applied by the Vietnamese government comprises repressive interventions such as rounding up of sex workers and drug users and placing them in forced rehabilitation centres. If the government and/or police decide to conduct a 'social evils round-up', arrested sex workers will be placed in these rehabilitation centres.

Sex workers were often harassed by law officials aiming to enforce the social evils legal framework. In fact, one week before the interviews with the young women took place, a social evils round-up occurred with arrests of many sex workers and which made many others go 'underground'.

Legal codes and social customs regulated the sex industry. In this way, the type and form of sex work was commonly determined by these factors (i.e. there were no brothel based sex workers in Viet Nam according to government viewpoint). They had few rights, were often blamed for their situation, and faced the threat of arrest and placement in forced rehabilitation centres with their families informed of their situation by the authorities.

**"The state law makes it difficult to have clients. I am afraid to get caught during the social evils round-up." (Kim – Thien Loi)**

It was often reported by sex workers that they were in constant fear of being caught by police. They even reported not wanting to be seen with condoms in the hotel or bar because they could be arrested at any time.

Sex workers were highly stigmatised by society, as they were seen as the proliferators of evil in society. According to the young women and key informants interviewed, the most detrimental aspect of being caught was that the authorities would inform a sex worker's family of her occupation and her time due in the rehabilitation centre. In this way, it was nearly impossible for her to return to her village home after her stay in the city, particularly if it had become known that she had been imprisoned because of prostitution. The stigmatisation of sex workers may have hindered reintegration efforts by the individual and increases their chances of remaining marginalised from their community and society.

### **7.2.6 Sex Worker and IDU**

Injection drug use was the primary mode of HIV transmission in Viet Nam. Recent attention was given to examining the injection drug use – sex work phenomenon. Were sex workers using drugs before becoming sex workers, therefore turning to sex work for needed drug money or turning to drugs after entering the sex industry? Within this study, two of the young women interviewed were injection drug users prior to becoming sex workers and had partners who were also IDUs. Only one female sex worker interviewed began using drugs as a consequence of sex work.

One of the sex workers in Thien Loi street admitted to being an injection drug user while showing her hands and arms riddled with track marks and scabs. (She also asked for information on where she could go for help.)

Drug use is often used as a coping mechanism for sex workers. Of the three IDU sex workers interviewed, two of the young women reported being introduced to drugs by their partner before entering sex work, while one young woman reportedly started using drugs after being introduced to it by the bar owner. All three of the IDU sex workers were in their mid to late twenties, had been in sex work the longest (approximately 2

years) and were working in a poorer section of Thien Loi Street. The IDU sex workers were all supporting an IDU partner as well.

Few IDU sex workers reported using condoms with their IDU partners. Within the drug environment, care and responsibility may present different meanings associated with risk management.

An interview with an IDU sex worker revealed that she “uses condoms with clients but not with my boyfriend.” (Thu – Thien Loi – IDU sex worker; HIV +)

Three of the sex workers interviewed also reported injection drug use. In addition, 2 of these sex workers interviewed did not use condoms with their boyfriends/lovers, even when they were sick.

“My sweetheart just died from opportunistic disease more than three months ago. I did not use condoms with my sweetheart but I use with clients.” (Hoang – Thien Loi - IDU)

According to the data, drug use began to increase as the duration of time in sex work increased.

### **7.2.7 Mobility and Increased Vulnerability**

Often young women and key informants reported that the sex workers were moved from a more popular area to a less desirable area and finally to street-based sex work during the ‘later’ stages (6 months to 2 years after they had arrived). While no street-based sex workers were interviewed for this study, several of the young women reported being moved from Do Son Township to Thien Loi Street. With this move, the young women’s ability to negotiate condom use and power may wane due to age or length of time in a selected area as a need for ‘fresh’ girls arose.

While it may appear that some young women chose to stay in the sex industry, several factors acted as barriers to their return and reintegration back to the village. Many young women felt obligated to remain in the city in order to continue helping their family. In addition, if the young women returned to their homes they may face family and community rejection due to social stigmas that have rendered them as damaged goods or of tarnished reputations. This can leave many young women with sex work as their only means of survival. Therefore, in the life cycle of a sex worker, it has been recognized that different levels of power and control occurred at different stages in her

employment. However, in an environment such as Viet Nam, the power to leave sex work (a reported wish of all the young women interviewed) and reintegrate into society may be the most challenging.

### **7.3 Discussion**

Young women have been in high demand in sex establishments in Viet Nam. Multiple factors within the sex industry and society, such as cheap, renewable and exploitable labour coupled with the acceptance of this exploitation, help promote the demand of sex work. This in turn renders young women vulnerable to infections, violence and abuse. The sex workers interviewed for this study have all migrated from a rural area in search of work. The majority have been introduced to work by a friend and exploited once introduced to their employer.

The majority of the young women report using condoms with clients. However, a few also report having had sexually transmitted infections. The young women state that they use condoms to prevent disease and to prevent pregnancy, while many of them had not heard of condoms or HIV/AIDS prior to leaving their village. They learnt about condom use and HIV/AIDS through 'older' sex workers. This is an important area for intervention. Thus, training 'older' sex workers on appropriate and consistent use of condoms is essential.

A significant theme that emerged during the data analysis was non-condom use with boyfriends. Almost all of the young women reported that they did not use condoms with their boyfriends or sweethearts. Only one young woman stated that she uses condoms with her boyfriend to prevent pregnancy. Condom use with boyfriends is seen as a breach of trust and the relationship is then little different from that of a client-sex worker relationship. Even when young women are involved in a 'high-risk' relationship (i.e., with an HIV+ partner, IDU or mobile worker) they feel it is important to not use condoms with their boyfriend. The personal nature and possible empowerment of the relationship outweighs the risks of infection. This question of non-condom use with boyfriends was of importance as young women may not have viewed unprotected sex in a personal relationship as 'risky'. Intervention messages were often aimed at condom use with clients only. This may have been limiting to the effectiveness of preventing infections.

Violence and fear were also a persistent theme throughout the interviews. The young women often experienced forced sex as their initiation into sex work. In addition, the majority of the young women are not allowed to use a condom for this sex act as they are commonly purchased for their virginity. The dynamics of violence and condom negotiation often leave a sex worker feeling powerless and vulnerable.

Young sex workers (notably those from rural areas who have just arrived) are ill-equipped to negotiate condom use with clients. It is at this time they are most vulnerable to infection and exploitation. They are often forced to service many clients a day (7 on average) and have very little control over their lives. Although the majority of young women in this study were not bonded and were 'free' to come and go, there are also different levels of control and coercion that keep them there. The control and coercion come not only from the hotel owners but also from their families.

It is interesting to note that the majority of the young women in this study had only been involved in sex work for a short time (a few days to several months). While reviewing literature it became apparent that this is consistent throughout other studies as well. For example, Le Bach (2002) found that 24 percent of the child sex workers interviewed had been working for approximately one month and 50 percent had only been working for three months. Another study found that 53% of indirect sex workers had been working for less than one year (Hong et. al. 1998; Elmer 2002). With a seemingly endless supply of 'fresh' young women from rural areas, what happens to the young women that are being replaced? In this doctoral research, young women who had returned from the city could not be identified or located in rural areas of the study. Interviews were conducted with 'older' girls in Thien Loi who had been working for a few years. However, the vast majority of young sex workers interviewed had been working for less than a few months. Therefore, young women may be entering street based sex work, or, less likely, integrating into urban society.

A relatively new phenomenon has emerged in Viet Nam: Injection drug use by sex workers. Although the population of sex workers using drugs is still quite small (compared to men), it is steadily increasing. This further fuels HIV/AIDS infection rates. Of the sex workers who use injection drugs in this study, two of the three used drugs before entering sex work. However, all of these young women had an IDU partner. Additionally, all of the young women using drugs were 'older', in their mid to late twenties.

Sex work, drug use, condom use and HIV/AIDS are in fact inextricably linked. A young woman who has migrated and has become a sex worker is at an increased risk of being exposed to all of these factors. She has entered a new environment where she has been forced to participate in risky behaviours. As a result she may develop her own risk behaviours as a coping mechanism or a survival strategy. Young migrant sex workers will continue to be vulnerable to infections, drug use, and sexual exploitation, unless policies and programmes work towards effective strategies to protect them.

## **7.4 Policy Implications**

These research findings illustrate the complex and dynamic impacts encompassing sex work, condom use (both with clients and non-clients) and drug use. There are numerous policies in place that can work towards reducing the risk of infection and drug use. In addition, these existing policies and future policies must be appropriately employed to assist young women who have been exploited.

Sex workers are aware of the necessity of condom use. The issue is to enable them to practice and negotiate condom use effectively. This can be accomplished through cultural, economic, political and legal change. However, change of behaviour or beliefs in these areas are most challenging.

It is often stated that prevention programs should teach sex workers culturally appropriate, effective negotiating and refusal skills to modify their client's behaviour and require condom use (Prybylski and Alto 1999). However, this would imply that there is equity in power and the sex worker has the choice to refuse clients who do not comply. Therefore it is also essential to target men (clients) in the necessity of condom use. "Even if sex workers are well educated in HIV/AIDS/STI prevention and always demand condom usage, it is unlikely that the current epidemic can be curtailed without a change in the male client attitude toward condom use" (Prybylski and Alto 1999).

In this way, interventions focusing on men as the primary decision-maker in condom use and sexual negotiation are essential. Empowering sex workers with skills to negotiate condom use is important. However, if the men hold most of the power, their education is crucial. Furthermore, Varga (1997) argues that more qualitative research is necessary to "identify intervention strategies which reach beyond education and



awareness to touch deep-seated socio-cultural and economic factors that influence sexual decision-making”.

In Viet Nam, past efforts to communicate HIV/AIDS prevention messages have often used stigmatising and negative messages. They generally link sex work and HIV/AIDS to “social evils”, in place of a more positive and educational public health approach (McCoy et. al. 2004). In this way, condoms are also linked to sex work and HIV/AIDS. The government continues to criminalise the use of condoms as condoning social evils in society. Therefore, pharmacies, hotels and people do not want to carry condoms for fear of arrest or suspicion. Organisations working with sex workers, their clients and IDUs must work with the government and advocate to encourage the acceptance and availability of condoms.

In addition, messages need to emphasise personal risk behaviour rather than focusing on ‘high-risk’ groups, this may improve personal risk perception. HIV prevention messages encouraging use of condoms with ‘girlfriends’, ‘boyfriends’ and/or lovers are highly necessary and recommended (Rushing 2001f). Currently, bonding and feelings of normalcy far outweigh the risks associated with unprotected sex. In this setting condoms are not of importance or analogous to love. Therefore, intervention messages for condom use need to incorporate love relationships among all groups.

Assessments and understandings of risk are essential in the context of the sex worker, her family and community. Education and information are positive steps. However, this is not always sufficient in changing behaviours (Wallman 2001). It is necessary to look at what is happening in and around the lives of young sex workers and their perceptions of risk and risk taking in order to develop more effective interventions. Peer education and personal storybooks are often used by NGOs as a tool to prevent HIV/AIDS amongst sex workers and high-risk populations. While this information is important, unless the sex worker leaves sex work, she frequently has no control over her risks (i.e., condom use, violence, arrests) (ibid).

Development of policies to combat violence faced by sex workers are essential. Heise et. al. (1994) suggests that “efforts to protect women must be strengthened and expanded at the local and national levels. But any strategy to combat violence must attack the root causes of the problem in addition to treating its symptoms. This means challenging the social attitudes and beliefs that undergird men’s violence and

renegotiating the meaning of gender and sexuality and the balance of power between women and men at all levels of society”.

Migration policies are also important in the reduction of HIV/AIDS. Policies that assist migrants and encourage access to services (most notably health services) rather than stigmatise and marginalise them are necessary. An improved understanding of migration processes may be significant in developing policies that reduce the spread of infection and exploitation. HIV/AIDS prevention programmes need to be integrated into interventions and development programmes ‘in which mobility is an integral part’ (Skeldon 2000).

Hence, distinct directions for programming must be developed to include internal migration and risk situations. As stated earlier, it is not the act of migration that is risky, it is the vulnerable situations in which migrants (especially females) enter that place them at increased risk. In this way potential risk can be decreased through lessening exposure to risky situations and more importantly through understanding and being prepared for these unfamiliar situations (Beesey et. al. 2001). Education for both males and females prior to migrating is essential in reducing and/or coping with high risk situations faced as a result of migration. If young migrants and their families are armed with the knowledge of what they will undoubtedly face in the unskilled labour market within an urban setting, they may be more inclined to deal with risk situations more effectively thus reducing their risk and vulnerability.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed how what is going on in the lives of the sex workers interviewed affects their vulnerability.

It also discussed the ‘life cycle’ of the sex workers and the various stages of power, control and risk in their lives. This chapter has examined the vulnerability of sex work on young female migrants. It identified key areas related to the effects of exploitation of sex workers: Sexual debut, ability to negotiate condom use, knowledge and access to condoms, ongoing sexual negotiations and relationships, potential for drug use and how power and control changes at each stage.

The overall theme of this chapter was the vulnerability of the youth sex workers to violence, potential infection and drug use as a consequence of their sexual exploitation.

The following chapter discusses how all of these elements in addition to the key data findings on family, migration and sex work tie together to encourage an environment facilitating the exploitation of young women of rural areas in Viet Nam as illustrated in the study's framework.

## **8 Discussion**

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### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter brings together themes that emerged from the literature and key findings of the data gathered from this study. First, this chapter discusses the key messages related to the conceptual framework and the newly documented findings that emerged from the research. Second, it examines how this study has added to the current literature through key findings based on the research study aims and objectives. Third, the limitations of the study methodology and the study site are addressed. And last, policy implications for migration and sexual exploitation are discussed and recommendations proposed.

### **8.2 Study Themes**

The primary theme of this study is that the migration and sexual exploitation of young women are rarely caused by one factor (often cited as poverty). Rather they are influenced and facilitated by a complex interaction of multiple factors functioning at a national, communal, familial and individual level. An aim of this study and an important theme was the decision-making and communication processes of migrant daughters (working as sex workers) and parents. These processes are influenced by numerous push, pull and facilitating factors, in particular, at the communal and societal level. And most notably influenced through the acceptance of youth migration and established informal networks. Another important theme is that of the young migrant's understanding of her situation prior to migrating and after realising her fate in the city.

Universally, the literature on youth migration and exploitation points to poverty and poor education as root causes, however, on their own, these factor are not able to explain why some families and youth employ the decision to migrate and enter sex work as an option and others from similar or worse situations do not (Le Bach 2002). In this way, investigating further factors which facilitate a family in the decision to send a child, coupled with the push and pull factors that enable a young woman's migration and exploitation can assist in clarifying how all levels play a role in these processes.

The conceptual model (fig. 2, pg. 39) used for this study highlights the multiple factors at various levels that influence a person's situation and vulnerability to a particular health problem or risk. Key areas of the framework that emerged as a result of this study include:

#### Community Level

- Availability of networks
- Acceptance by commune officials and community members

#### Family Level

- Networks of friends, siblings, neighbours and relatives
- Filial piety
- Parental expectations of monetary remittance

#### Individual Level

- Attitude towards acceptance of duty towards parents
- Decision-making process for migration and sex work
- Understanding of job offer before and after migration

These key findings along with an overview of other findings that emerged as a result of this research are discussed in the following sections.

### **8.2.1 Societal/National Level**

In the case of young women's migration and sexual exploitation in Viet Nam, national laws and policies often discriminate against and stigmatise young women migrants and their status as a sex worker. Society blames sex workers for creating 'social evils' while allowing men to use her services and hotel owners and parents to profit from her.

In addition to more concrete factors such as laws and policies, social norms and traditions with regard to the status of women and children must be challenged. While some laws are meant to protect young women migrants and youth exploitation, other laws, such as social evils campaigns act as a barrier to ameliorative efforts. Consequently, the detrimental, periodic and inconsistent enforcement of the anti-social evils campaigns only serve to reinforce feelings of fear and powerlessness among sex

workers. Government policies and programmes are often conducted with a discriminatory and stigmatizing social evils approach.

Social norms and values evolve over time; unfortunately, they do not always protect members of society or consider their best interest. Social norms may facilitate youth migration and sexual exploitation through acceptance or ambivalence. Therefore, a family may be more inclined to send their daughter to the city if it was deemed socially acceptable. So while social norms can work as a protective factor they also serve as a facilitating factor.

### **8.2.2 Community Level**

Community values and norms may also act as a protective factor through lack of established networks and heightened sense of community cohesion. “Beliefs, traditions, values and customs are crucial for community cohesion, either good or bad, and contribute to the socialisation of family and individuals” (Le Bach 2002). Therefore, traditional values can be both protective and risk factors for migration and entry into sex work as well. Communities can also act as a force encouraging a young woman’s migration which can lead to sexual exploitation.

At the community level it was found that acceptance, by community leaders and members, of migration and reported awareness of sexual exploitation to young women was a key factor in determining if a family sent their child or did not send. In communes where no migration of youth took place, community leaders expressed a concern that youth should be protected from the risks of migration to the city. While migration for youth can be made safe, community leaders from non-sending villages ensured that families were aware of the risks. In contrast, community leaders in sending villages reported that they were aware of the risks however, they agreed that young women and men must go to the city to help their families. In this way, a clear division was made between protective factors and facilitating factors at the community level.

Another key finding that emerged strongly in this study was that of networks and their critical role in migration and entry into sex work. Without these networks, migration would not take place. Networks can also be used as an important tool in making the migration process safe and informed, however this was not the case in this research. Networks commonly led to a job offer and facilitated migration of young women. The messages related to networks are discussed in more detail in section 8.2.5.

### **8.2.3 Family Level**

While the society and community are important in shaping traditions and cultural norms, the family level acts as the primary point of decision-making and household economic resource management. This directly effects the migration and exploitation of the children within that household.

The family may encourage their child to migrate in order to access job opportunities in the city to assist with family income. Youth migration may be employed by the family as a survival strategy, coping mechanism or means to obtain material possessions.

The family situation, such as dysfunction within the family (i.e., drug use, divorce, single parent household, etc.) is also a significant predictor of youth migration. In this situation the children themselves might feel compelled to leave home or the parents make that decision for the child.

In terms of household economic resource management and decision-making, the demographics of the home become important. For instance, decisions may be based upon the number of children in the household, the number of children in school, and the sex and age of the children. Families often place more importance on one gender than another, or on the education of one child. Therefore all of these factors leading to migration and exploitation of youth act in concert with one another.

Another theme that arose during the data collection and analysis regards expectations of monetary remittance from the child migrant. Data from household interviews found that parents had expectations of monetary remittance. It appears from household reports that parents find sending their child to work in the city as profitable. Parents report sending their child because they expect money sent home 'like other children'.

Parents even have an amount of money attached to the expectation. These expectations may have been reinforced by other families with migrant children and increased observed material wealth amongst these families. Therefore, the perceived profitability of a child's work in the city may also be a predictor of sending. In addition, data indicates that absolute poverty perhaps is not the underlying issue here, as observed networks assist in the expectations of increased income.

Similar to the community level, networks among friends (discussed in section 8.2.5) and family decision-making were the most significant factors in young women's

migration. However, literature and study findings also cite the profound affect of filial piety on a girl's decisions and risk taking.

Filial piety remains a strong tradition in Viet Nam, in fact it may be the root to Vietnamese society and way of life. Honouring your parents and elders is essential. This tradition however, appears to also have negative consequences. As parents request their daughters to migrate, young women feel compelled or obligated to obey. In this way, filial piety is not only a push factor for a young woman's migration but is also a pull factor that keeps her in the city to continue supplementing the family income. In addition, filial piety is a contextual factor in the ecological model of the conceptual framework which acts at the family level and the individual level through expectations by parents and obligations by their children.

#### **8.2.4 Individual Level**

The individual (female migrant sex worker) is highly influenced by all levels. As a youth she feels a sense of duty to respect her parent's wishes and to assist in the family income. She has been affected by her community's acceptance of migration with known risks and she is exploited by the society in which she lives – through sex work, stigma and obligation to family.

Girls in Viet Nam are conditioned to believe in obligations towards parents and in their duty to honour and assist their parents. They may also believe that it is the parent's wish for them to remain working in the city, as they have often been asked to migrate by the parents (Siddiqi and Patrinos 1995). In this way, they are forced to accept risk situations as part of their obligation, as 'filial piety is the compass by which these girls direct their actions' (Schunter 2001; Le Bach 2002).

Other key factors that lead to migration and exploitation at the individual level include the lack of awareness of the working conditions or of the realities of sex work, physically, psychologically and emotionally. The job offer at the village level often led to migration, however the young woman's understanding of the job offer was not what took place in reality. Young women in this study report being offered various jobs at the village level. While some of the young women report having been told they would work in sex work or at an entertainment venue, the majority were virgins and did not understand the reality of the situation until after their initial sex. Thus, the job offer at the village level and the young woman's understanding of this offer combined with her



families encouragement to migrate to work were essential factors in migration of young women and their sexual exploitation. Although the job offer was significant to migration, the offer could not have taken place without established networks.

### **8.2.5 Recruitment Networks**

While literature and data indicate the importance of networks, this study found, through the small sample of non-sending families and communities, that lack of networks and information for sending a child was a key barrier and/or protective factor.

As networks are one of the most significant factors related to migration and sexual exploitation, using these networks for prevention and education may be an effective intervention. However, this is assuming that the value of a child outweighs the desire for increased income or profit.

Although the networks are significant to migration and sexual exploitation, they also act as an unfortunate source of deception. Literature cites that young women are often deceived by the job offer at the village level. Many young women and families are told that they will work in a restaurant or factory in the city and once there, they frequently find they have been deceived (Butcher 2003; Liao, et. al. 2003; ILO/IPEC 1998).

Literature cites that girls are often forced into sex work unknowingly. Those that 'agree' to do sex work commonly have a limited understanding of what it entails until after their first sex with a client. By this time, many girls opt to stay in sex work, as literature argues, because of the money. However, if preceding literature suggests that poverty alone is not the sole influence of migration and sexual exploitation, the reality of girls remaining in sex work only for the money appears to be unlikely.

Adding to the deception and complexity of the daughter's plight is the misinformation given to the parents. Sex workers interviewed for this study had not correctly informed their parents of their actual activity, instead they informed their parents they were working as domestic servants, waitresses, etc. It then appears that some parents may be deceiving their daughters and the daughters are misinforming their parents, in this way; the networks of deception further complicate an issue overwrought with complexities.

In addition to the facilitation of migration through networks, the demand for unskilled and 'free' labour creates a constant flow of migrants to urban areas. As Anderson

(2001) points out, people have disregarded the need for sustainability of goods and labour, assuming there will be a constant supply which “simply appears and is maintained free of charge”. In light of the situation of migration and unskilled labour supplies in Viet Nam, this assumption is not surprising. Hotel/bar owners have a steady supply of young women brought to them or arriving at their doorstep. Often very little effort is put forth to encourage the migration and exploitative labour of young women in Viet Nam. The young women exploited for sexual services seem to be expendable and renewable at little or no cost to the employer and with profit to the parents and hotel owner.

### **8.3 Migration and Vulnerability**

Additional key messages and new findings that emerged from the study relate to the vulnerable environment in which young women are placed a result of uninformed and/or misinformed migration.

Women and girls who migrate are eminently more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, and to the impact of sexual violence than males, which can lead to work within the sex industry (Beesey et. al. 2001).

The process of obliging a child to migrate and work is exploitative in and of itself. As a result, young migrant women are often thrust into a new and unknown environment where new skills must be learned quickly and behaviours adapted rapidly. These new attitudes and behaviours associated with the freedom from family and community may lead to ‘riskier’ behaviours for migrants. The breakdown of the family unit and community norms can be a consequence of migration. In addition, being alone in a new environment, migrants may attempt new things or look for solace in drugs and high risk relationships (Beesey et. al. 2001). The act of migration in itself is not a risk, but the transitions in migrants’ lives leave them vulnerable, thus placing them in high risk situations (Haour-Knipe and Grondin 2003; Beesey et. al. 2001). According to Beesey, “knowledge, behaviour, and attitudes of the target population are important for determining the susceptibility of migrants to be exposed to risk situation, and their ability or propensity to practice safe behaviours that may protect them”.

Violence and coercion are major themes throughout the young women's stories. 18 of the 20 young women were virgins prior to entering sex work. Even though they report knowing they would work in an entertainment or service venue, their expectations were not what took place in reality. Nearly all of the young women report forced sex as their initiation into sex work. The young women also state that after the initial forced sex, they felt resigned to sex work.

The findings from this study show that the majority of young women had already engaged in unprotected sex (most commonly due to forced initial sex) prior to learning about condom use and HIV/AIDS. It is important that risk is recognised in the early stages of sex work or even at the village level.

Although the majority of the young women were tricked or lured into sex work they also report being aware (at different levels) of what to expect and the potential risks involved. However, the young women also report a willingness to continue with high risk behaviours due to the monetary rewards for their families.

Therefore, the data suggests that young women are influenced by a variety of contextual factors that lead to their migration and potentially to sexual exploitation. By examining these factors the issues can be better understood in order to prevent young women's exploitation.

## **8.4 Addition to Current Literature and Knowledge**

This study has improved the understanding of the decision-making processes between parents and their children in relation to migration for work in the city. While the study found that the father reported generally making the decision for his child to migrate (with community member data in agreement), the daughters often cited themselves as the decision-makers. The data suggests that it is not the actual person who makes the decision that is significant but the influences leading to the decision and more importantly, the perceptions of each. If a daughter feels obligated to assist her family, her only power and self-worth may lie in the ownership of the decision to migrate. So while each reports it was their decision, the data indicates that even if the daughter decides on her own, it is most commonly because she has been influenced or encouraged. However, contacts and networks appeared also essential in initiating the idea and process; without these, migration may not be possible or feasible to most youth.

## **8.5 Limitations of the Study**

There are many limitations associated with conducting research in Viet Nam. The strict government regulations together with an extremely sensitive topic, which the government does not always acknowledge, created many obstacles. At the national and provincial level, increased suspicion was placed on the study as both migration and sexual exploitation are not often acknowledged. The idea of an outsider talking with people in rural villages and brothel areas (which are not recognised as existing) about sensitive issues was seen as a concern. In rural areas commune leaders, police and authorities often accompanied the researcher and assistant to household interviews. This undoubtedly led to respondent bias. However, even in this environment, families shared information with the researcher. The way in which questions were phrased and the positive attitude towards migration resulted in useful responses at the rural level.

Building the trust of the commune officials often took many hours. Due to the sensitive nature of child migration and sex work, data collection relied heavily on the cooperation of each commune leader.

Focus groups and individual key informant interviews in the rural areas were a constant challenge. Many uninvited members attended meetings however, it was culturally inappropriate to ask uninvited members to leave, therefore focus group discussions are cited as key informant interviews as only one leader of the community was allowed to speak.

Time limitations created an additional weight on this study. The time constraints included the formal government approval process which at times took months for select provinces. After a formal letter from the collaborating NGO had been submitted to the provincial authorities, dates would be set by the authorities and a strict timeline and schedule were given to be followed. If all interviews were not complete during the specified time, the approval process began anew; thereby significantly impacting the study timeline.

Time constraints also related to the sex workers. Generally the sex workers began work in the late morning and work throughout the day and night. Therefore, interviews had to be conducted during 'work hours'. In this way, many young women did not want

to sit through an hour interview as this was time away from earning money. The young women were also nervous and wary of being seen with a foreigner (even though interviews were conducted in a private room). The researcher remained considerate and appreciative of the time offered by the young women during the interviews.

Shortly before gaining government permission for a field visit, the government conducted a 'Social Evils Campaign' round-up of the sex workers. As sex work is illegal in Viet Nam, the young women were rounded up and taken to other areas or placed in rehabilitation camps. This limited the study in that the remaining sex workers went 'into hiding' and were difficult to access. Fortunately, the relationship between the young women, the hotel owners and the assistant and interpreter assisted in gaining access and trust for interviews.

In Viet Nam there is a general concern about making negative statements against the government. People often do not voice their opinion about government matters. While this issue was not directly referred to in the interviews it was touched upon by some participants. Several key informants requested that they remain anonymous when speaking about the government and its policies. In addition, the translator requested that a negative statement about the government, given by a sex worker, not be included in the data.

Overall, the research was successfully completed with much credit owed to the research assistants/translators. The research was only possible with the logistical assistance of DKT International.

## **8.6 Future Research**

This study is only part of the potential areas that can be explored with regard to the migration and sexual exploitation of young women. As was illustrated in the conceptual framework, young women's migration and sexual exploitation are influenced by multiple factors acting at various levels. Therefore, many areas of interest could benefit from in-depth research. This study can be used as a starting point for future research.

Future studies must focus more closely on sexual exploitation through the migration process. In addition, studies should look at efforts focused on women and girl migrants

prior to becoming sex workers. As a result, the needs of young women may be met prior to being placed in vulnerable and exploitative situations.

It is recommended that future research include an examination of what happens to young women after working as sex workers for several months. Three studies cited that the majority of young girls (66.5% and 50%) interviewed had only been in sex work less than six months and over half (53%) less than one year (Hong et. al. 1998; Le Bach 2002; Elmer 2001) This study found similar results after taking a sample of sex workers of various ages. Only 2 out of the 20 young women interviewed had been working as a sex worker for more than one year, the other young women reported having only worked from one week to several months. In this way, it is beneficial to gain a better understanding of what happens to this seemingly endless supply of young women.

Additional research is also necessary on comparing discourses between parent and child (female migrant sex worker). With regard to the discourse is the level of denial and recognition surrounding what parents actually know will happen to their daughters, to what extent to they recognise and justify risks and to what is extent does denial take place in order to 'save face' while increasing income.

Past research has focused on migration, sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS as separate entities. Future research must focus on them as interrelated. Qualitative research on the sociological and psychological impact of HIV/AIDS, rather than merely the biological impact, is necessary. Expecting a woman to use a condom because it will prevent infection does not take into account other things that are happening in her life such as obligations to her parents, necessity of income and desire for personal relationships.

There is also a need for research to focus on what factors influence sex workers' condom use and, if in fact, HIV/AIDS fits into decisions concerning condom use. The identification of contextual and socio-cultural issues which influence behaviour are essential. This approach may clarify the dynamics influencing sex workers' decisions towards condom use both with clients and non-client partners. This approach is a crucial step toward more effective and sustainable HIV/AIDS interventions. Qualitative work is necessary to identify intervention strategies which are able to reach beyond education and awareness to "touch deep-seated socio-cultural and economic factors that influence sexual decision-making" (Varga 1997).

Future research must take into account the holistic and comprehensive nature of exploitation of young women through migration and sex work. In addition, future research must be designed and conducted with vulnerable populations and government partners. It is through this process that research findings will better translate into policy and practice.

## **8.7 Policy Implications**

### **8.7.1 Concepts of Childhood**

Viet Nam has shown its commitment to the care and protection of children through being the first country in Asia and the second nation in the world to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Statistics Office 1999). (Please see Appendix # for Convention on the Rights of the Child.) However, the adaptation and enforcement of this ratification has been limited.

The laws and ratifications for the protection of children are many in Viet Nam, yet according to Kelly and Le Bach (2000), there is an extremely limited understanding of the laws by Provincial, District and Commune leaders, and many are even unaware of the laws' existence.

Vietnamese law (according to the Law on Protection, Care and Education of the Child, Article 1) defines children as those under the age of 16 years. While this is an official definition, the perception of childhood by cultures and societies can differ dramatically. Childhood does not necessarily have a distinct age in many societies; it is often a gradual process that may be based on criteria other than age (Anker and Melkas 1996). Families, communities and societies also place a value on children. The value of children is a "social psychological construct referring to the values attributed to children by parents" (Kagitcibasi 1998). In this way, different worth or value is ascribed to children in various socioeconomic contexts (Kagitcibasi 1998). While Viet Nam recognises the value of children, Confucian ideas of filial piety often appear to contradict the 'rights of a child'.

Many organisations working with children adopt the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as their main policy for implementing programs. However, in this study very few community representatives or families interviewed understood, remembered or knew about the Rights of the Child and what it entails. If organisations work from a

Child Rights framework, they must clarify this nebulous idea of child rights in order to better understand how the community perceives child rights and how that translates into action.

Child *work* and child *labour* are two different concepts. In many developing nations, including Viet Nam, children are expected to work to assist the family in labour or income. Therefore, very few parents may feel that their child is actually being exploited. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) acknowledges the traditional roles of children in assisting the family. These roles develop an integral part of the socialisation process of children. It is not the idea of child work that many oppose; it is exploitative forms of child labour, including young women migrating for sex work to assist the family (Myers 2000; Anker and Melkas 1996). Therefore, young women and families must be educated on the benefits and risks of migration in order to make an informed decision and to enable the migration process to be made safe and non-exploitative.

The conceptualisation of poverty and policies related to this is another matter of importance. Poverty can be defined in many ways, however three main categories arise: absolute poverty, relative poverty and vulnerable poverty. Absolute poverty is related to material deprivation, relative poverty refers to both material and social deprivation and vulnerable poverty is related to a lack of savings or safety nets in the event of an emergency need of additional income (i.e. an illness in the family or crop failure) (personal conversation with Carrie Turk, World Bank, Viet Nam 2002; Williamson and Reutter 1999). The method in which poverty is conceptualised and measured has ramifications for the kinds, characteristics and success of policies (Williamson and Reutter 1999). If an individual's or family's concept of poverty within their household varies from other households, policies related to poverty and poverty alleviation must also be varied and holistic. Furthermore, despite the fact that poverty may be viewed as absolute or relative, the relationship between perceived poverty, migration and health is persistent and consistent (Williamson and Reutter 1999).

### **8.7.2 Preventing entry into sex work**

UNAIDS (2002) proposes that vulnerability of youth can be reduced through strengthening the family and community structure to create a solid culture of protecting young people from sexual exploitation. In this way, commune leaders, educators and community representatives must be encouraged to advocate an environment that will not tolerate exploitation.



Although community and family culture is important in protecting a child, education and opportunities are also vital protective factors. Gender specific and appropriate education and vocational training are needed. However, these interventions must also be reflective of the local context and coherent with market demands (Raymond et. al. 2002). In stating this point, it must be noted that the current market demands include a steady supply of sex workers. Therefore, alternative employment should pay similar to or more than sex work for this to be an effective ameliorative effort.

Many vocational training programs to alleviate poverty and reduce youth migration are ineffective because they do not take into consideration the market realities. Ironically, some vocational training programs may advance migration as those who have acquired new skills migrate to the city to earn more money (Vu Ngoc Binh 2002). One non-government organisation in Viet Nam, encountered this situation. After training youth in rural areas in order to prevent migration, the youth had gained enough skills to migrate as semi-skilled labourers (personal communications with an NGO in Viet Nam 2002).

Raymond et. al. (2002) states the need to “create work opportunities that address both the practical and strategic economic and business needs and interests of women from a rights, gender, market and ethics-based perspective; and including in public awareness campaigns, information enabling women to migrate safely, such as information on their rights as migrant workers, reference points when in crisis, services available and social networks that they may contact at destination points; provide information not just on the eve of departure, so that the woman has time to digest the information, seek clarifications and additional information if required”.

### **8.7.3 Migration**

Policies that restrict or heavily control migration may in fact lead to increased ‘underground’ movement of people (Anderson and O’Connell 2003). In Viet Nam, migration is controlled by the government. Undocumented migrants are restricted access to services. Policies must be modified to include youth in rights and access to services. “Unless governments do something to address the social devaluation of migrants, and their social, political and economic marginalization, regulation may merely serve to reinforce existing racial, ethnic and national hierarchies in the sex industry” (Anderson and O’Connell 2003).

Haour-Knipe and Grondin (2003) put forth recommendations for policy and practice to reduce vulnerability of migrants. They propose that two fundamental programming bases are necessary for reducing migrants' risk and vulnerability. The first is to use a rights-based approach and the second to involve migrant communities. "Leaders and representatives of migrant and mobile groups know what their needs are and how to meet them. At the same time it is the responsibility of governments, including health and immigration authorities, to define priorities and develop policies of inclusion rather than exclusion, of balanced rights and responsibilities for both migrant and host communities" (Haour-Knipe and Grondin 2003). Governments may face numerous challenges in dealing with irregular migrants and mobile populations. However, non-government organizations can work with government partners to play a key role in advocacy and policy development and implementation of interventions.

More comprehensive research is needed to understand the connections of migration, sexual exploitation and its consequences. However, funders are less likely to finance research that does not fit neatly into a donor agenda or a theoretical framework such as "HIV/AIDS prevention" or "trafficking" (Agustin D'Andrea 2002). Research and publications that explore migrant sex workers' lives in a 'myriad of ways' may encourage a change in how society views sex workers.

#### **8.7.4 Sex Work**

It is clear that the current government policy of working with sex workers is more detrimental than beneficial. While the government attempts to cleanse Viet Nam of sex work through raids and 'forced rehabilitation', this further drives the sex industry into a less visible state and sex workers become more vulnerable. A public health or human rights based approach would be much more helpful to sex workers. However, this approach appears to be a Western concept. Therefore, international non-government organisations should work more closely with their government counterparts in Viet Nam to introduce and develop policies that are more holistic and rights based in order to empower sex workers.

Strategies and interventions developed at the community level must also be put into practice at the policy level. Legislative changes, policy and framework development must promote an environment which reduces stigma and discrimination as well as

supports the local level strategies. In countries such as Viet Nam where the social evils policy criminalises and stigmatises sex workers, if broad policies are not easily changed to include a rights based approach, at least they can strive to promote a safer environment. This may include access to services and encouragement of safer sex practices.

UNAIDS (2002) argues that “the ways in which programmes are developed, implemented and evaluated have a direct bearing on their effectiveness”. In this way, programmes and policies must include, rather than exclude, sex workers, clients and gatekeepers in the development and implementation process. In addition, responses must focus not on select stages or areas of a sex worker's life, but address their psychological and emotional needs, while attempting to influence the socio-cultural and economic context in which they work.

Often several NGOs work with the same population of sex workers. In this research population of sex workers, three different organisations were working with the same young women. However, the organisations were all working with different issues such as HIV/AIDS, condom use, or peer education. Responses need to be coordinated to more effectively implement programmes and policies.

Raymond et. al. (2002) points out that “rather than accept the unexamined premise that some women need prostitution to survive economically, we question why prostitution is the only place where mostly women can turn when all else fails. It is a gendered reality that prostitution may be the best of the worst economic options that many women face. However, the fact that there are often no better income opportunities for women shouldn't function as a new economic law turning many women's desperate economic plight against them by institutionalizing their exploiters as entrepreneurs. In our framework, this is to surrender the political battle for women's right to sustainable work, and to tolerate that women's bodies are increasingly bought for sex and used for merchandise in the marketplace”. As a result, governments must implement policies which protect women's rights, decriminalize women and create opportunities for women other than in the sex industry.

“The intricacy of issues linked to sex work compels us to view our responses from both micro and macro perspectives – from individuals vulnerable to, or engaged in, sex work, to the industry's larger social and economic underpinnings. It will require great political will to confront the sensitive issues raised by sex work and devote resources to

a sector characterised by stigma and discrimination. Responses addressing the risks and vulnerability of sex work are clearly rooted within a broad development context. Therefore, the benefits of such initiatives will have impacts beyond the sex work community” (UNAIDS 2002).

Policies regarding migration, sex work, exploitation, poverty and HIV/AIDS must be comprehensive and rights based. In this way, women and girls will not only be empowered but will also be protected and respected.

## **8.8 Translating Research Findings into Policy and Practice**

Research findings are an essential component to advising public health policy and practice. It is through research that governments and organizations can develop and implement more effective programmes. Research findings do not necessarily bring about policy and policy changes, but researchers can assist in shaping the way in which health policies are viewed.

Initial collaboration with policy-makers in the research process can improve future implementation. It is vital that researchers, especially in an environment like Viet Nam, involve policy-makers in each stage of the research. As a result, the research findings are much more likely to move from data to active dissemination, then further to policy (Davis and Howden-Chapman 1996). The impact of research can also influence a change in attitude of policy-makers. As in Viet Nam, NGOs must continue to work closely with government partners in order to promote a public health based approach to interventions and policy.

## **8.9 Conclusion**

This research illustrates the complex dynamics involved in exploitation of young women in Viet Nam through migration and sex work.

Migration and exploitation of young women rarely act alone; rather they are intrinsic in the interplay of many factors at the societal, communal, familial, and individual levels. Government policies, cultural norms and traditions, in addition to family and individual

decision-making, influence the likelihood of the migration and sexual exploitation of young women in Viet Nam.

Many young women from rural areas are persuaded into migration and end up in sex work as a result of need or desire for increased income. In this way, young women are exposed to many high risk situations. While research has been conducted to investigate sex work and the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there has been little exploration of what factors cause a girl to migrate or the implications of this decision.

This research has contributed to the knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence migration and sexual exploitation. The research found that social norms and acceptance of child migration, in addition to existing networks were significant facilitating factors. The research also found that discourses and expectations (spoken or unspoken) between the parents and children pushed young women into the city and kept them in sex work.

Continued research involving families and sex workers is essential. In addition, the dissemination of research findings to the target populations and authorities is necessary so that policies are developed and interventions implemented to decrease the exploitation of young women.

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# APPENDICES

**Appendix A : Informed Consent Form**

Informed Consent for Research Study on Young Women's Migration in Vietnam

Female Migrant

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
code# \_\_\_\_\_

Int. code: consent

Title: Young women's migration in Vietnam

Researcher: **Rosanne Rushing**

Research assistant/translator: *Thu*

Xin Chao (hello), my name is Thu and this is Rosanne Rushing. We are talking to you today because we would like to find out more about girls who migrate to work in the city. We want to talk with you about your views on girls migrating to the city to work and how you came to the city to work so that we can learn from you and your community. Through your help we can better understand more about your experience as a female migrant.

This hotel has been chosen by chance, and you were asked to participate in this study because you have migrated from a rural area to the city and are now working in the hotel business in Do Son. We want to talk with you about your life and your family's life.

We have been given approval by the provincial leaders to talk with you, however you still have the choice of talking with us or not. Talking with us is your choice, if you do not want to talk with us or do not have time, we understand and we will not complain to you or to your boss. If you do want to talk with us, you can stop at any time for any reason, or choose not to answer any questions that we ask.

If you do choose to talk with us, we will not use your name or hotel number so that you will not be identified on any documents. What you share with us will help us understand rural life in Vietnam and the reasons for migrating to the city to work.

Do you have any questions?

The interview will take about one hour to complete. Do you agree to be interviewed?

NOTE WHETHER RESPONDENT AGREES TO BE INTERVIEWED OR NOT

[ ] DOES AGREE TO BE INTERVIEWED

[ ] DOES NOT AGREE TO BE INTERVIEWED – THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR TIME AND END.

We would also like to ask if we can use what you tell us in a report. We write down exactly what you say and put that on paper. We will not use your name or anything that may identify you.

Do you agree that we can use what you say in writing? ( ) Does agree ( )Does not agree

We do not have a camera and will not take any pictures of you.

Is now a good time to talk?

---

TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWER

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THE ABOVE CONSENT PROCEDURE TO THE PARTICIPANT

Signed\_\_\_\_\_Code #\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Guidelines for interviews with female migrant sex workers**

Code#\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. We would like talk with you about your views and ideas on coming to the city.

First we would like to ask a few questions about your experience before, during and after you left your village.

Tell me about why you left home?

### **PROBES FOR DISCUSSION**

Can you tell us about how the decision was made to go to the city and who was involved in making this decision?

- Want to go & if not tell parents didn't want – their response
- If your decision, discuss with parents – they want you to go
- At what point realize you would go
- Have a choice in leaving or not
- Parents influence decision – filial piety
- What did family say when first spoke to you about this – or you to them

How did you or your family first find out about coming to the city?

- Encouraged by anyone
- Have siblings, friends or relatives in city
- Tell others in village about work in city – what
- How to get to city

Before you left your village, what did you understand about how you would get to the city,

- What type of job you would do
- And where would you live
- Who explained
- Did this change
- Offered a job before left – by who – what did they say
- Have a plan of transport, job, etc. before leaving
- Aware of type of work in Do Son/ Thien Loi
- Work expected or tried prior to hotels

- Come to Do Son straight from village or other work first
- Type of work in hotels when first arrived – different now

What was life like at home before you left?

- Atmosphere in home – (happy – family life)
- Relationship with parents
- Any problems in home – history of alcohol, violence, dysfunction
- Any in school
- Parents married
- Siblings help with income
- Family expect money to be sent home – how much
- What is this money used for usually
- Is money sent home important to family welfare

Why do you think that you came to work in the city rather than another brother or sister or family member?

- Do you know any friends from your village who work in the city?
- People in village think about girls working in the city
- Parents or other villagers know about your work in Do Son
- What have you told your parents you are doing in the city?
- Boys and girls from your village go to the city – for how long
- Other brothers or sisters working in city – tell about them
- Do you think that your going to the city has helped your family? In what way?
- What do you hope for your family?
- What do you hope for your life now and in the future?

Now we would like to ask you some questions about your work here and what it is like. You can tell us if you do not feel comfortable answering any question. What you tell us is strictly between you and me, we will not tell anyone here what you have told us.

How did you start working in the hotels and who introduced you?

Can you tell us about your first 'sex act' with a client?

- Client first sexual experience
- Who arranged for the sex act?
- How did you feel?
- Did you use a condom with the first client?
- Use condoms with clients since then?
- If have boyfriend use condom with him?
- Where did you learn about using a condom?
- Why do you use condoms?
- Current experiences with clients (treat you well)
- Have boyfriend – tell about relationship
- Main clients – average number per day
- Payment system – client, hotel owner, etc.
- Seasonal migration – where go – come back to same hotel each time
- Change hotels during season
- Come and go from hotels any time

- Where live – where when not working
- Free time
- How are new girls introduced

Would you recommend this work to a sibling or a friend? Why or why not?

- Do you have friends or people you can trust? Why or why not. What can you tell me about them?
- Do girls help each other here?
- Do you return home to your village? How often – or why not
- Return home to marry?
- Do you know of any girls from your village who have left the hotels in Do Son? Where did they go? What kind of work do they do now? Did any of them return to work in Do Son?
- How long do you think you will stay doing this work?

Girls working in Thien Loi area:

- ❑ If worked in Do Son first – what happened when you left Do Son – how did you start working here?

If IDUs:

- ❑ How did you start using drugs?
- ❑ Were you working as a sex worker first or using drugs first?
- ❑ If has a partner – is partner an IDU?
- ❑ Do you share needles with partner or friends?
- ❑ Do you use condoms?

A personal statement that shared is expressed here (i.e., I am sorry to hear about the problems in your family, you should be proud of yourself for being such a strong person and wanting to help your sister...). Do you think talking with us has been useful?

I appreciate you sharing your experience and want you to know that your story is very important will be used to help others like you.

Thank you for sharing with us and for your time.



## **Appendix C: Key Informant Consent Forms**

### **Key Informant Interviews**

#### **Informed Consent Form for Research Study on Young women's Migration in Vietnam**

**Code#** \_\_\_\_\_

*Title: Female Child Migration in Vietnam*

*Principal Investigator: Rosanne Rushing*

*Research Assistant/Translator: Thu*

*Email address: rosannerushing@hotmail.com*

Xin Chao (hello), my name is Thu and this is Rosanne Rushing. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today.

We are talking to you today because we would like to find out more about your views on females who migrate to Do Son Township to work. We want to discuss what you think about how and why a female child is sent to the city so that we can learn from you. Through your help we can better understand more about your area and communities all over Vietnam.

Talking with us is your choice, if you do not want to talk with us or do not have time, we understand. I want to assure you that all of your answers will be confidential. If you do want to talk with us, you can stop at any time for any reason or to skip questions that you do not want to answer.

If you do choose to talk with us, the information will be kept confidential. The information you share with us will be used together with all the interviews to help us put together a report to better understand rural and migrant working life in Vietnam.

The information we are writing (and/or recording) will only be seen by the researcher. After we write down the information, the tapes will be destroyed. The tapes and the written interviews will be kept with the principal investigator and will be stored and locked so that no one else can see the information you have shared with us. However, since the Provincial AIDS Committee is a small group, it may be possible that you can

be identified in the written report. If you agree to be interviewed you have some options if you do not want to be identified.

( ) would like to remain anonymous but we can use quotes

( ) would like to remain anonymous and no quotes used

( ) would like to name to be attributed to quotes and waive right to confidentiality

( ) would like information to be used as background only and not attributed to a person or the Committee.

Your participation is completely voluntary but your experiences could be very helpful to other communities in Vietnam.

Do you have any questions?

I have read the explanation sheet and the consent form and understand the purpose of this interview.

The interviewers have answered any questions I had concerning this study.

The interview will take about 40 minutes to complete. Do you agree to be interviewed?

**NOTE WHETHER RESPONDENT AGREES TO BE INTERVIEWED OR NOT**

[ ] DOES AGREE TO BE INTERVIEWED

[ ] DOES NOT AGREE TO BE INTERVIEWED – THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR TIME AND END.

If you agree, we would like to use a tape recorder during the interview. We understand if you do not feel comfortable with this and will not use it if you do not agree. All recordings will be destroyed after they have been written down and only myself and Miss Rosanne will see the information. If you don't feel comfortable with us taping the interview we can take notes, which do you prefer?

Do you agree for us to use a tape recorder?

( ) DOES AGREE TO BE TAPE RECORDED

( ) DOES NOT AGREE TO BE TAPE RECORDED

Is now a good time to talk?

TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWER

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THE ABOVE CONSENT PROCEDURE TO THE PARTICIPANT

Signed

---

## Appendix D: Interview Guideline for Key Informant Interviews

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
code# \_\_\_\_\_

Int. \_\_\_\_\_ code: \_\_\_\_\_ consent

### Interview Guideline for Key Informant Interview

*Title: Young women's migration in Vietnam*

*Researcher: Rosanne Rushing*

*Research Assistant: Thu*

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. We would like talk with you about your views and ideas on female girls who migrate to the city.

First we will ask you some questions about your area.

Total Population of Province:

Number of poor household's in province:

Number of hotels in Do Son Township:

Number of registered indirect sex workers in Do Son:

Number of sex workers in Thien Loi area:

- Can you please describe your work to us?
- What can you tell me about youth who migrate to the city?
- What can you tell me about young women who migrate to the city?
- What kind of work do these girls usually do?
- What kind of work do the girls who migrate to Do Son usually do?

- What can you tell me about this area as a receiving city for female migrant sex workers?
- What is your role in working with female migrant sex workers?
- How closely do you work with the girls? Hotel owners, etc.
- What are the good things about these girls who work in Do Son? And what are the bad things?
- What are the effects on the child and society (both long term and short term) when children migrate?
- What are the effects on the female youth migrant of migrating and working in Do Son – long term and presently?
- What type of job do you think the girls can get after they leave work at the hotels?
- What do you think the families of these girls know about their child's life in the city before their children go? What about after the girls have started working?
- How do you think other people view the families who have girls working in the city?
- How do people here view the migrant sex workers?
- What is life like for the girls both now and in the future?
- Is the migration process different for girls and boys?
- Are there any risks for girls or boys when migrating and working in the city?
- Is it the child's responsibility to help the family with an income?
- What resources are available in the community to help poor families?
- What resources are available to assist girls who would like to return home?
- What resources are available in Do Son to assist girls with medical or emotional needs?

- Do you feel there are any problems associated with female youth migration? Or with the migrants becoming sex workers?
- What do you feel are potential solutions to female youth migration (especially those leading to sexual exploitation)?
- What are your priorities (PAC's) priorities in working with this population of girls?
- What can be concretely done to assist the girls and to prevent sexual exploitation of female youth migrants?
- What do you hope for the future of these girls? How can that be accomplished?

## **Appendix E: Interview Guideline for NGO research on child economic migration and trafficking in Vietnam.**

### **Community Representatives**

#### **Objectives:**

- To discover attitudes and beliefs about migration/trafficking held by community leaders.
- To assess the knowledge level (of CR) of laws at the national and local level concerning migration/trafficking
- To assess the technical knowledge level (i.e. migration processes, routes, people involved) of community leaders.
- To assess the economic conditions of the commune as described by the community leaders.

#### **Survey Questions:**

**Date:**

**Name of Commune:**

**Number of Villages in Commune:**

**Total Population of Commune:**

**What are the main sources of income for the majority of the people in your commune?**

**Do the majority of the people in this commune have a sufficient income? What do you consider a sufficient income?**

**Do the majority of the people in this commune have an opportunity for employment?**

**What can you tell me about migration in your area?**

Do you know of any technical aspects of migration/trafficking – the processes, passages or people involved?

How does the community view families or individuals that have migrated?

*Why do you think families/individuals from your commune migrate?*

Who do you think may be at risk for migration/trafficking?

What do you think are the advantages of migrating?

What are the reasons not to migrate/send a child to work outside of the commune?

What do you think would cause a family to migrate or to send their child for migration?

What are the risks of migrating/sending a child to work?

How do you think migration effects the community?

Are there any laws relating to migration/trafficking of children at the national or local level?

Are you aware of any programs in your area to prevent migration/trafficking?

Are there any services available for migrant families in your commune?

Are there any services/assistance available for poorer families in your commune?



**Appendix F :Vietnamese Translation of Interview Guideline with Rural Community Representatives**

***Đại diện của địa phương***

***Các câu hỏi điều tra***

Ngày\_\_\_\_\_

Chức danh trong phường (xã)\_\_\_\_\_

Tên phường (xã)\_\_\_\_\_

Số tổ trong phường (số làng trong xã) \_\_\_\_\_

Tổng số dân trong phường (xã)\_\_\_\_\_

1. Nguồn thu nhập chính của đại đa số dân cư trong phường (xã) là gì?  
  
(
2. Đại đa số dân cư trong phường (xã) có thu nhập đủ sống không? Như thế nào  
tức gọi là có thu nhập đủ sống?  
  
(
3. Đại đa số dân cư trong phường (xã) có cơ hội kiếm việc làm không?  
  
(
4. Ông (bà) có thể cho biết về vấn đề di cư trong phường (xã) của mình không?
5. Ông (bà) có biết các quá trình, lộ trình và những người tham gia vào việc di cư  
và buôn bán trẻ em?

6. Cộng đồng nhìn nhận những người hay những gia đình đã từng di cư đi nơi khác như thế nào?
7. Ông (bà) cho rằng tại sao các gia đình hay mọi người ở trong phường (xã) lại di cư đi nơi khác?
8. Ông (bà) nghĩ rằng những người như thế nào có khả năng sẽ di cư đi hay bị buôn bán?
9. Ông (bà) cho rằng cái lợi của việc di cư là gì?
10. Lý do gì khiến mọi người không di cư đi nơi khác hoặc không để cho con cái đi nơi khác làm việc?
11. Theo ông (bà) thì điều gì khiến cho một gia đình di cư đi nơi khác hoặc để cho con cái đi nơi khác làm việc?

12. Nguy cơ của việc di cư đi nơi khác hoặc để con cái đi nơi khác làm việc là gì?

13. Ông (bà) cho rằng việc di cư ảnh hưởng đến cộng đồng như thế nào?

14. Có điều luật nào ở cấp quốc gia hoặc cấp địa phương liên quan đến việc di cư và buôn bán trẻ em?

15. Ai chịu trách nhiệm thực hiện những điều luật này?

16. Ông (bà) có biết chương trình nào ở địa phương nhằm ngăn chặn việc di cư và buôn bán trẻ em?

17. Ông (bà) có biết chương trình giúp đỡ nào đối với các gia đình di cư trong phường (xã) của mình không?

18. Phường (xã) có sự trợ giúp nào đối với những gia đình nghèo trong phường (xã) không?

## **Appendix G: Interview Guidelines for Organisations working in the NGO programme areas**

### **Organizations working in the commune (Vietnam Women's Union, Youth Union)**

#### **Objectives:**

- To discover attitudes and beliefs about migration/trafficking held by community organizations.
- To assess the knowledge level of laws at the national and local level concerning migration/trafficking.
- To assess the technical knowledge level (i.e. migration processes, routes, people involved) by community organizations.
- To assess the economic conditions of the commune as described by the community organizations.
- To discover any existing programs to assist people at risk of migration/trafficking and/or returning migrants.

#### **Survey Questions:**

**Date:**

**Name of Commune:**

**Number of Villages in Commune:**

**Total Population of Commune:**

**What are the main sources of income for the majority of the people in your commune?**

**Do the majority of the people in this commune have a sufficient income?**

**Do the majority of the people in this commune have an opportunity for employment?**

**What can you tell me about migration in your area?**

Do you know of any technical aspects of migration/trafficking – the processes, passages or people involved?

How does the community view families or individuals that have migrated?

*Why do you think families/individuals from your commune migrate?*

Who do you think may be at risk for migration/trafficking?

What do you think are the advantages of migrating?

What are the reasons not to migrate/send a child to work outside of the commune?

What do you think would cause a family to migrate or to send their child for migration?

What are the risks of migrating/sending a child to work?

How do you think migration effects the community?

Can you identify any cultural factors that relate to migration? (filial piety, *hieau* – moral debt, *on*)

Are there any laws relating to migration/trafficking of children at the national or local level?

Who is responsible for enforcing these laws?

How do you feel about existing laws and their enforcement?

Are you aware of any programs in your area to prevent migration/trafficking?

Are there any services available for migrant families in your commune?

Are there any services/assistance available for poorer families in your commune?

## Appendix H: Vietnamese Translation of Interview Guidelines for Organisations working in the NGO programme areas

**Các tổ chức hoạt động trong phường (xã) (Hội Phụ Nữ Việt Nam, Đoàn Thanh Niên)**

**Câu hỏi điều tra**

Ngày \_\_\_\_\_

Tên tổ chức \_\_\_\_\_

Tên phường (xã) \_\_\_\_\_

Số tổ trong phường (số làng trong xã) \_\_\_\_\_

Tổng số dân trong phường (xã) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Nguồn thu nhập chính của đại đa số dân cư trong phường (xã) là gì?
2. Đại đa số dân cư trong phường (xã) có thu nhập đủ sống không?
3. Đại đa số dân cư trong phường (xã) có cơ hội kiếm việc làm không?
4. Ông (bà) có thể cho biết về vấn đề di cư trong phường (xã) của mình không?
5. Ông (bà) có biết các quá trình, lộ trình và những người tham gia vào việc di cư và buôn bán trẻ em?



6. Cộng đồng nhìn nhận những người hay những gia đình đã từng di cư đi nơi khác như thế nào?
7. Ông (bà) cho rằng tại sao các gia đình hay mọi người ở trong phường (xã) lại di cư đi nơi khác?
8. Ông (bà) nghĩ rằng những người như thế nào có khả năng sẽ di cư đi hay bị buôn bán?
9. Ông (bà) cho rằng cái lợi của việc di cư là gì?
10. Lý do gì khiến mọi người không di cư đi nơi khác hoặc không để cho con cái đi nơi khác làm việc?
11. Theo ông (bà) thì điều gì khiến cho một gia đình di cư đi nơi khác hoặc để cho con cái đi nơi khác làm việc?

12. Nguy cơ của việc di cư đi nơi khác hoặc để con cái đi nơi khác làm việc là gì?

13. Ông (bà) cho rằng việc di cư ảnh hưởng đến cộng đồng như thế nào?

(

14. Ông (bà) có thể cho biết những yếu tố về văn hóa nào liên quan đến việc di cư? (con cái giúp đỡ bố mẹ, vvv)

15. Có điều luật nào ở cấp quốc gia hoặc cấp địa phương liên quan đến việc di cư và buôn bán trẻ em?

(

16. Ai chịu trách nhiệm thực hiện những điều luật này?

17. Ông (bà) nghĩ như thế nào về những đạo luật hiện hành và việc thi hành những đạo luật đó?

18. Ông (bà) có biết chương trình nào ở địa phương nhằm ngăn chặn việc di cư và buôn bán trẻ em?

19. Ông (bà) có biết chương trình giúp đỡ nào đối với các gia đình di cư trong phường (xã) của mình không?

20. Phường (xã) có sự trợ giúp nào đối với những gia đình nghèo trong phường (xã) không?

## **Appendix I: Interview Guidelines for Family Members with a Child MigrantFamily Members**

### **Objectives:**

- To assess the attitudes and beliefs surrounding migration/trafficking.
- To assess the decision-making processes within the family.
- To gain a better understanding of cultural/societal obligations.
- To determine (as much as possible) perceived push and pull factors of migration.

### **Survey questions:**

**Date:**

**Name of village:**

**Is your child a sponsor child?**

**If so, for how long?**

**Are you married?**

**How many people live in your household?**

**How many children do you have?**

**Boys?              Girls?**

**What is your education level?**

**What is your wife's/husband's education level?**

**Father's occupation?**

**Mother's occupation?**

**Compared to other people in your village, do you feel that the level of wealth you and your family have is sufficient? (higher, same, lower)**

**Do you think there is sufficient opportunities for employment in your village?**

**Why do you think that people from your village might migrate/send their daughter for marriage or work outside the commune?**

**What do you think are advantages of migration?**

**What are the disadvantages of migration?**

**What are some reasons that would cause a family/individual to migrate?**

**Do you plan to remain in this village indefinitely?**

**What would cause you to leave your village?**

**What jobs are there available in your village for your children as they grow?**

**What do you think are the risks of a girl when migrating/marrying outside of her commune?**

**Who in the family makes the decision to migrate or send a child out to work?**

**Do you feel it is your child's duty to respect that decision?**

**Do you feel it is your child's duty to help support the family?**

**What amount of money do you feel a child who works outside of the commune should send home?**

**Is this amount important to the family's welfare?**

If you do have a child who has migrated to work, are they able to send money home? If so, how much?

Do you have any friends or relatives who have migrated or sent a child to work outside the commune?

What do they tell you about their life as a migrant?

Do they encourage you or any member of your family to migrate?

How are migrants (and/or migration) viewed by others in the village?

**Appendix J : Vietnamese Translation of Interview Guidelines for Rural Household Members with Child Migrant.**

**Thành viên trong gia đình:**

**Các câu hỏi điều tra:**

Ngày \_\_\_\_\_

Tên làng \_\_\_\_\_

Con của ông (bà) có phải là trẻ do Plan bảo trợ không? \_\_\_\_\_

Đã được bảo trợ trong bao nhiêu lâu? \_\_\_\_\_

Ông (bà) có kết hôn không? \_\_\_\_\_

Nhà ông (bà) có bao nhiêu người? \_\_\_\_\_

Ông (bà) có mấy con? \_\_\_\_\_

Con trai? \_\_\_\_\_ Con gái? \_\_\_\_\_

Trình độ học vấn của ông (bà)? \_\_\_\_\_

Trình độ học vấn của vợ (chồng) ông (bà)? \_\_\_\_\_

Nghề nghiệp của chồng? \_\_\_\_\_

Nghề nghiệp của vợ? \_\_\_\_\_

1. So với những người khác trong làng (tổ) ông (bà) cho rằng cuộc sống của gia đình mình có đầy đủ không? (giàu hơn, nghèo hơn, như mọi người)

2. Ông (bà) có nghĩ rằng mọi người ở trong làng (tổ) của ông (bà) có cơ hội kiếm được việc làm cho không?

3. Ông (bà) cho rằng tại sao mọi người trong làng (tổ) của ông (bà) phải di cư đi nơi khác/để con gái họ lấy chồng nơi khác/để con họ đi làm việc xa nhà?

4. Ông (bà) cho rằng cái lợi của việc di cư là gì?
5. Ông (bà) cho rằng cái bất lợi của việc di cư là gì?
6. Một số lý do khiến cho các gia đình hoặc các cá nhân phải di cư là gì?
7. Ông (bà) có định ở lại làng mình mãi mãi không?
8. Điều gì khiến cho ông (bà) phải rời làng mình ra đi?
9. Những công việc nào ở làng mà con ông (bà) có thể làm khi chúng lớn lên?
10. Ông (bà) cho rằng một cô gái khi di cư khỏi làng mình hoặc lấy chồng nơi khác thì có nguy hiểm gì không?

2



11. Ai là người trong gia đình quyết định di cư đi nơi khác hoặc để con cái đi làm xa?

12. Ông (bà) có cho rằng con cái phải vâng lời bố mẹ khi bố mẹ bảo đi làm xa nhà?

13. Ông (bà) nghĩ rằng một người con đi làm xa nhà thì nên gửi về nhà bao nhiêu tiền?

14. Và số tiền đó có quan trọng đối với cuộc sống gia đình hay không?

15. Nếu ông (bà) có con đi làm xa nhà, chúng có gửi tiền về cho ông (bà) không? Nếu có thì là bao nhiêu tiền?

16. Ông (bà) có bạn bè hay họ hàng di cư ra khỏi làng hoặc cho con cái đi làm xa nhà không?

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17. Họ nói với ông (bà) những gì về cuộc sống di cư của họ?
18. Họ có khuyến khích ông (bà) và những người trong gia đình ông (bà) di cư không?
19. Những người khác trong làng nhìn những người di cư như thế nào?
20. Ông (bà) có biết điều luật nào về việc di cư không?

20

17. Họ nói với ông (bà) những gì về cuộc sống di cư của họ?

18. Họ có khuyến khích ông (bà) và những người trong gia đình ông (bà) di cư không?

19. Những người khác trong làng nhìn những người di cư như thế nào?

20. Ông (bà) có biết điều luật nào về việc di cư không?



17. Họ nói với ông (bà) những gì về cuộc sống di cư của họ?
18. Họ có khuyến khích ông (bà) và những người trong gia đình ông (bà) di cư không?
19. Những người khác trong làng nhìn những người di cư như thế nào?
20. Ông (bà) có biết điều luật nào về việc di cư không?

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## Appendix K: Cancellation Reports for Migrant Children in Rural Provinces

### Cancellation with "Relocation" reason

PU: Vietnam

Date: 11 Mar.02

Location name			Total cancellation per commune and FY						
PU Name	District Name	Commune Name	FY'01			FY'02			Total
			Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
NAM HA	THANH LIEM	Liem Can	4	1	3	2	2		6
		Liem Tuc	9	5	4	5	1	4	14
		Liem Son	7	3	4	11	4	7	18
		Thanh Tam	3	1	2	0			3
	Y YEN	Yen Trung	9	4	5	1	1		10
		Yen Thanh	5	3	2	0			5
		Yen Tho	6	2	4	2	2		8
	BINH LUC	An Noi	4	2	2	1	1		5
		Boi Cau	2	1	1	3	2	1	5
		Dong Du	5	4	1	8	3	5	13
		Don Xa	3	1	2	1	1		4
	LY NHAN	Van Ly	9	3	6	3	1	2	12
		Chinh Ly	7	1	6	10	5	5	17
		Hop Ly	6	4	2	2		2	8
	Total of Nam Ha PU		79	35	44	49	23	26	128
HA NOI	BA DINH	Phuc Xa	1	1		2	2		3
	HOAN KIEM	Phuc Tan	8	5	3	4	2	2	12
		Chuong Duong	1	1		0			1
	HAI BA TRUNG	Bach Dang	15	7	8	8	5	3	23
		Hoang Van Thu	8	5	3	3	2	1	11
	Total of Ha Noi PU		33	19	14	17	11	6	50
BAC GIANG	YEN THE	Phon Xuong	2	2		0			2
		Huong Vy	2	1	1	0			2
		Dong Lac	2		2	0			2
		Tan Soi	2	2		0			2
		Dong Ky	6	4	2	1		1	7
	TAN YEN	Lien Son	1	1		3	1	2	4
		Tan Trung	6	3	3	4	2	2	10
		Hop Duc	1		1	1	1		2
		Phuc Hoa	0			0			0
	LANG GIANG	Duong Duc	2	1	1	1	1		3
		Tan Thanh	1		1	2	1	1	3
		Tien Luc	3	2	1	2		2	5
	Total of Bac Giang PU		28	16	12	14	6	8	42
QUANG TRI	GIO LINH	Gio My	5	5		0			5
		Gio Thanh	7	3	4	2		2	9
		Gio Mai	0			2	2		2
		Gio Quang	0			0			0

		Gio Hai	10	3	7	13	4	9	23
		Trung Giang	17	5	12	0			17
		Trung Son	2		2	3		3	5
		Linh Thuong	0			0			0
	<b>CAM LO</b>	Cam Chinh	0			0			0
		Cam Nghia	0			1	1		1
		Cam Thanh	1	1		2	1	1	3
		Cam Thanhf	14	11	3	9	6	3	23
		Cam Thuy	1	1		0			1
		Cam Tuyen	2	1	1	0			2
	<b>VINH LINH</b>	Vinh Long	0			0			0
		Vinh Giang	0			0			0
		Vinh Chap	0			1	1		1
		Vinh Tu	0			0			0
		Vinh Son	0			0			0
<b>Total of Quang Tri PU</b>			<b>59</b>			<b>33</b>			<b>92</b>
<b>PHU THO</b>	<b>SONG THAO</b>	Van Ban	0			1	1		1
		Yen Duong	0			0			0
		Ta Xa	6	3	3	3	2	1	9
		Huong Lung	0			3	2	1	3
		Cap Dan	0			0			0
	<b>TAM NONG</b>	Van Luong	0			0			0
		Tho Van	0			0			0
		Xuan Quang	0			0			0
<b>Total of Phu Tho PU</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>QUANG NGAI</b>	<b>TU NGHIA</b>	Nghia Dien	0			2	1	1	2
		Nghia My	0			6	3	3	6
	<b>NGHIA HANH</b>	Hanh Nhan	1	1		6	4	2	7
		Hanh Dung	0			4		4	4
	<b>SON TINH</b>	Tinh Tra	0			0			11
<b>Total of Quang Ngai PU</b>			<b>1</b>			<b>18</b>			<b>19</b>
<b>THAI NGON</b>	<b>DONG HY</b>	Van Han							
		Tan Long							0

# Cancellation with "Relocation" reason

PU: Vietnam

Date: 11 Mar.02

Location name			Total cancellation per commune and FY								
PU Name	District Name	Commune Name	FY'95	FY'96	FY'97	FY'98	FY'99	FY'00	FY'01	FY'02	Total
NAM HA	THANH LIEM	Liem Can	3	9	10	0	0	7	4	2	35
		Liem Tuc	1	9	5	4	9	4	9	5	46
		Liem Son	0	18	5	2	5	2	7	11	50
		Thanh Tam	1	4	5	5	5	4	3	0	27
	Y YEN	Yen Trung	0	13	3	9	17	7	9	1	59
		Yen Thanh	0	0	5	1	2	3	5	0	16
		Yen Tho	0	0	1	10	12	4	6	2	35
	BINH LUC	An Noi	0	0	1	2	2	3	4	1	13
		Boi Cau	0	0	2	3	4	2	2	3	16
		Dong Du	0	4	10	10	5	2	5	8	44
		Don Xa	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4
	LY NHAN	Van Ly	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	3	12
		Chinh Ly	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	10	17
		Hop Ly	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	8
	Total of Nam Ha PU		5	57	47	46	61	38	79	49	382
HA NOI	BA DINH	Phuc Xa					0	2	1	2	5
	HOAN KIEM	Phuc Tan					4	3	8	4	19
		Chuong Duong					0	4	1	0	5
	HAI BA TRUNG	Bach Dang					4	2	15	8	29
		Hoang Van Thu					0	0	8	3	11
	Total of Ha Noi PU						8	11	33	17	69
BAC GIANG	YEN THE	Phon Xuong				1	1	4	2	0	8
		Huong Vy				0	4	3	2	0	9
		Dong Lac				0	2	1	2	0	5
		Tan Sol				0	0	2	2	0	4
		Dong Ky				4	2	2	6	1	15
	TAN YEN	Lien Son				0	0	3	1	3	7
		Tan Trung				0	1	18	6	4	29
		Hop Duc				0	0	0	1	1	2
		Phuc Hoa				0	0	0	0	0	0
	LANG GIANG	Duong Duc				0	0	1	2	1	4
		Tan Thanh				0	5	6	1	2	14
		Tien Luc				0	1	5	3	2	11
	Total of Bac Giang PU					5	16	45	28	14	108
QUANG TRI	GIO LINH	Gio My		6	4	2	2	7	1	0	22
		Gio Thanh		1	0	2	1	6	4	0	14
		Gio Mai		2	3	0	1	0	2	0	8
		Gio Quang		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Gio Hai		0	4	1	4	11	13	0	33
		Trung Giang		1	2	4	2	19	3	0	31

9

	CAM LO	Trung Son		2	6	1	1	2	3	0	15
		Linh Thuong		4	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
		Cam Chinh		0	1	6	1	0	0	0	8
		Cam Nghia		0	2	1	1	2	0	0	6
		Cam Thanh		0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
		Cam Thanhf		0	7	2	3	14	10	0	36
		Cam Thuy		0	2	2	0	1	0	0	5
		Cam Tuyen		0	0	2	1	4	0	0	7
	VINH LINH	Vinh Long		0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
		Vinh Giang		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Vinh Chap		0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
		Vinh Tu		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Vinh Son		0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total of Quang Tri PU				16	32	23	18	66	39	5	199
PHU THO	SONG THAO	Van Ban							0	1	1
		Yen Duong							0	0	0
		Ta Xa							0	3	3
		Huong Lung							6	3	9
		Cap Dan							0	0	0
	TAM NONG	Van Luong							0	0	0
		Tho Van							0	0	0
		Xuan Quang							0	0	0
Total of Phu Tho PU									6	7	13
QUANG NGAI	TU NGHIA	Nghia Dien							2	0	2
		Nghia My							6	0	15
	NGHIA HANH	Hanh Nhan							7	0	17
		Hanh Dung							4	0	32
	SON TINH	Tinh Tra							0	0	49
		Total of Quang Ngai PU									19
THAI NGUYEN	DONG HY	Van Han									
		Tan Long									



**Appendix L: Indicators on the Rights of the Child in Viet Nam**

THE GENERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE  
THE COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION AND CARE OF CHILDREN, VIET NAM

# **INDICATORS ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN VIET NAM**

STATISTICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE  
Hanoi, February, 1999

## **Article 32**

1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.
2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:
  - (a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
  - (b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;
  - (c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

## **Article 33**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.

## **Article 34**

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;

The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

## **Article 35**

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

**Appendix M: The Vietnamese Committee for Protection and Care of Children's list of specific duties and functions that pertain to the protection and care of children:**

1. Coordinate state agencies to plan strategy, develop programs, projects and plans for the care of children at a national level and submit said ideas to the Government for approval; coordinate with state agencies and social institutions to implement designs that are approved.
2. Work with related state agencies to draft laws and ordinances on child care and education, and submit them to the Government; issue guidelines to and exercise supervision over the implementation of state policies in localities. Organize ministries, sectors, localities, and the media to disseminate state policies on protection and care for children.
3. Work with the State Planning Committee (now the Ministry of Planning and Investment) and the Ministry of Finance to draw out financial plans for the implementation of these programs. Supply guidelines for the use of financial resources in child protection projects. Oversee compliance with those rules.
4. Submit prospects to the Government for joining international organizations for ratifying international conventions concerning children; participate in international seminars and workshops on children as directed by the Prime Minister.
5. Administer internationally funded programs and projects for children in accordance with Government regulations.
6. Provide child protection officers at all levels with professional training and skills management.
7. Manage the Children's Protection Fund at the national level; supervise the use of the fund in districts and localities.
8. Monitor implementation of the Law on Protection, Care and Education. Coordinate related state agencies in implementing the law and suggest the measures to deal with procedural violations (Lien et al, 1999).

**Appendix N: Pseudonyms corresponding with study code numbers from female migrant sex worker interviews:**

**Do Son Township**

DS1: Thuy

DS2: Hoa

DS3: Phuong

DS4: Mai

DS5: Bich

DS6: Thuan

DS7: Duong

DS8: Thi

DS9: Thanh

DS10: Nga

**Thien Loi Street**

TL1: Thu

TL2: Hoang

TL3: Kim

TL4: Lien

TL5: Tien

TL6: Anh

TL7: Bian

TL8: Hien

TL9: Dao

TL10: Kieu

**Appendix O: Names of Provinces, Districts and Communes Selected for Interviewing Households at the Village Level**

Province	District	Commune
Nam Ha	Binh Luc	Don Xa
	Thanh Liem	Liem Son
	Y Yen	Yen Trung
	Ly Nhan	Chinh Ly
Quang Tri	Gio Linh	Gio My Gio Ha
	Cam Lo	Cam Thanhf Cam Chinh
	Vinh Linh	Vinh Chap Vinh Son
Phu Tho	Song Thao	Ta Xa Huong Lung
	Tam Nong	Van Luong Xuan Quang

## **Appendix P: Charting of Themes Emerging from Transcriptions**

**The following are two excerpts from the interviews with sex workers.**

**TL1**

**Demographic info:** She was 22 years old at the time of the interview (YOB 1982) and reported leaving home at the age of 18. She is from Nam Dinh province.

**Reason for leaving home:** "I left home because of big trouble in my family. My mother and father divorce. When they divorce, my elder brother raised me but he is also poor so I think I have to go out to earn money.

**Recruiter/network:** Someone in my village told me I could work dish washing in restaurant in Hai Phong and my brother was in prison."

**Recruitment into service industry:** "After working as a dish washer for 4 or 5 months someone asked me to become karaoke bar (girl) – after that I agreed. They did not explain what work I would do in karaoke. I worked there about one year."

**Sexual debut with a client:** "When I was 19 years I had my first sexual client. I cried."

"The bar owner arranged for my sex. The bar owner told me to come to a room and take some medicine and I fell asleep. When I woke up I realize I lost my virginity. "

"now I am working in a different bar. I stayed at that bar for one and a half years." "I never told anyone about my first experience."

**Future:**

"I have not returned to my home – I have no where to go (no home). My parents are remarried ."



## Charting of themes from sex worker interviews

Interview number:

**TL8**

**Demographic info:** She was 21 years old at the time of the interview and left home at age 20. She is from rural Hai Phong province.

**Recruitment into service industry:** I have an aunt working in Hai Phong, I work for her as a servant – my Uncle is (molesting) me. I was tired of the work (I went once) in a cyclo around the city and he (the cyclo driver) showed me here (the bar) with the price of 500,000 dong to the cyclo driver from the bar owner. The bar owner said I must receive clients because he paid 500,000 for me. Many drug users living with me in the bar – my money was stolen today so I cannot go back home – is impossible now. I live with 4 bar owners and 8 sex workers in a house. My aunt didn't want me to leave and my uncle also wanted me to stay for his reasons. I never told anyone about my uncle, I don't want my parents to be worried about that. And my aunt doesn't know anything."

**Info to parents:** "My parents think I work in shoe factory and rent in a boarding house. I return home every weekend."

**Money earned:** "I earn 1-2 million but give my family only 100,000/week because I (am) supposed to be working in shoe factory."

**Sexual debut with a client:** "I worked as servant for one day – then the bar owner said I had to make-up (put on make-up). I asked why I have to make-up, the bar owner continuing making questions – 'what were you here (for)?'. The bar owner said she must receive clients to repay debt. (For the) one (first) and two (second) client I was against receiving clients, the third client

cam into room, I took off my clothes and accepted. I don't care what happen to me and I was crying."

"The first time I felt nothing, I don't care what happens."

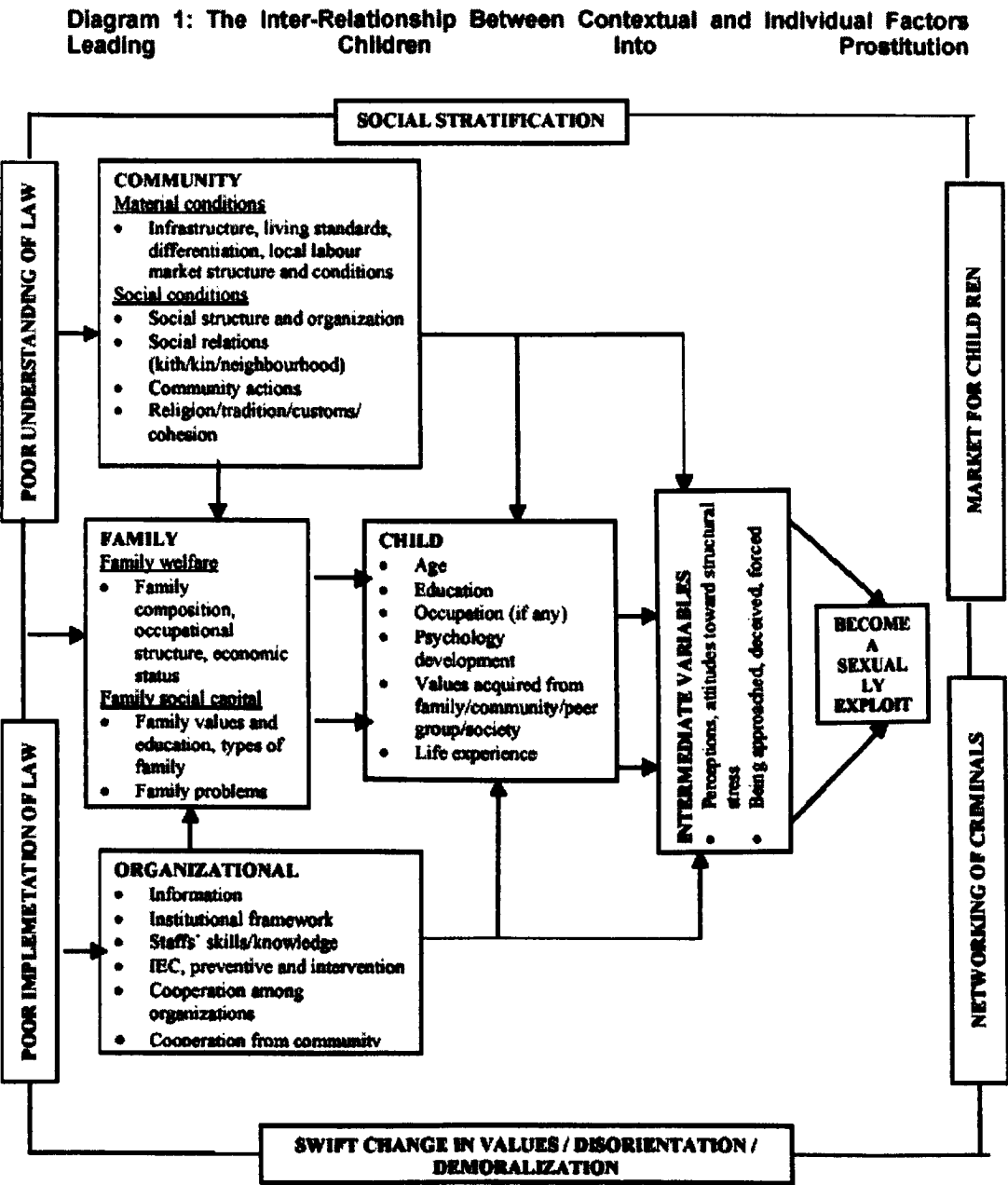
**Violence:** "Many clients are very cruel and they fight with me if I cannot satisfy them. I like a person who respects for me, I unhappy to hear bad word from clients. Other sex workers are accustomed to hearing bad words but not me."

**Condom use:** "I have never received a client without a condom. I think condoms from the US are best quality. I get (condoms) from the owner, but prefer to buy from pharmacy because (I) do not trust quality of Okay (condom brand). I learned about condom through mass media and (I am) afraid of STI."

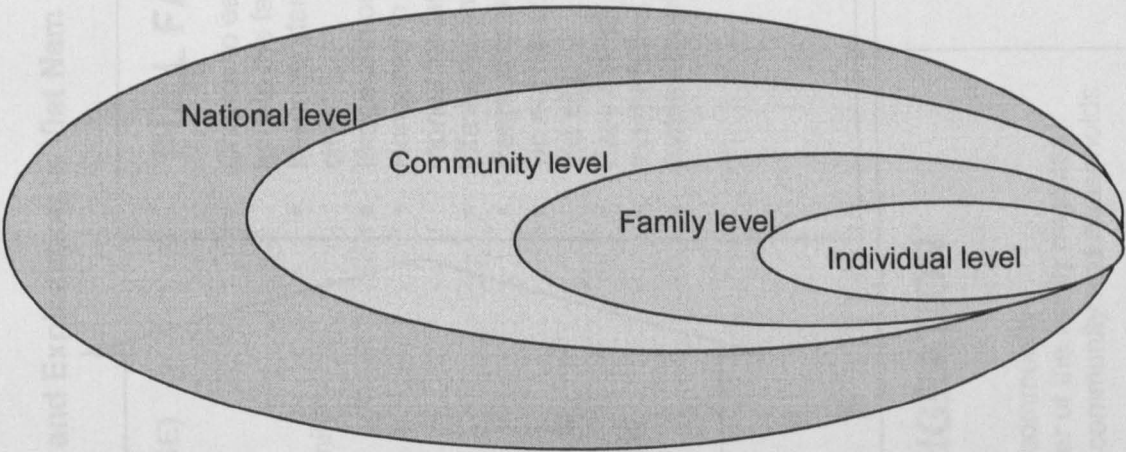
**Recommendation to friends:** "No never recommend (this job to anyone)."

**Future:** "I will stay until near future, asking for help for my job. I would like to work in office and work with computers."

Appendix Q: The Inter-Relationship Between Contextual and Individual Factors Leading Children into Prostitution (Le Bach 2002).



# **Appendix R: Draft of Ecological Model of Multiple Influential Factors of Migration and Sex Work in Viet Nam**



<u>National/Societal Level</u>	<u>Community Level</u>	<u>Family Level</u>	<u>Individual Level</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Weak or misunderstood laws related to migration and exploitation</li> <li>&gt; Lack of law enforcement</li> <li>&gt; Social Evils approach</li> <li>&gt; Influences of Doi Moi</li> <li>&gt; Increase in urban/rural inequality</li> <li>&gt; Social acceptance of youth migration and sexual exploitation</li> <li>&gt; Market for sex workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Available networks</li> <li>&gt; Acceptance by commune officials and members</li> <li>&gt; Community norm – socially acceptable</li> <li>&gt; Material conditions of commune/village</li> <li>&gt; Community values and traditions – such as filial piety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Family values and traditions</li> <li>&gt; Family attitudes of filial piety</li> <li>&gt; Networks of friends, siblings, neighbours and relatives</li> <li>&gt; Family economic resource management and strategies</li> <li>&gt; Household situation – dysfunctional, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Age</li> <li>&gt; Gender</li> <li>&gt; Education</li> <li>&gt; Attitude towards acceptance of duty towards parents</li> <li>&gt; Values acquired from family and community</li> <li>&gt; Ability to adapt and/or risk take</li> </ul>

**TEXT  
CUT OFF IN THE  
ORIGINAL**

## Appendix S : Original Framework for Research on Female Youth Migration and Exploitation in Viet Nam

### PUSH FACTORS

- Family level
  - Parental attitudes towards filial piety
  - Poverty
  - Lack of work in villages
  - Debt
  - Cannot afford school fees
  - Number of siblings in school
  - Number of siblings at home
- Individual level
  - Gender of child
  - Age of child
  - Dysfunction/violence in household
  - Natural disaster in village = lack of food and crops to work
  - Desire for improved living standards

### FACILITATING FACTORS (BRIDGE)

- Acceptability of youth migration by community, commune leaders and households
- Available networks for migration (family /friends who facilitate)
- History of migration in village
- Location to transportation/roads
- No available resources
- Lack of factual knowledge or understanding of child's life in city
- Family need of income overrides risk to child
- Viewed as successful/profitable coping strategy

### PULL FACTORS

- Chance to earn additional income to help the family
- Misunderstanding of job offer in city
- Image of money in the city
- Honoured to bring in additional money for family
- Life experience in the city
- Peers encourage or set example
- Do not have to do hard labour in the city
- Easy money in the city
- Independent lifestyle
- Availability of jobs

### BARRIERS TO CHILD ECONOMIC MIGRATION

- No known networks for migration
- Support networks to keep children in the household/community
- Alternative solutions to youth migration (adult member of the family migrates)
- Youth migration not accepted by commune leaders, community and households
- Remote location
- No history of child/youth migration
- Parents aware of risks to child in the city and do not want to send
- Alternative coping strategies for poverty alleviation
- Availability of resources within community